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# MODERN STATESMEN,

OR

## SKETCHES FROM THE STRANGERS' GALLERY

OF

## THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

BY

J. EWING RITCHIE,

AUTHOR OF THE "NIGHT SIDE OF LONDON," "THE LONDON PULPIT," "HERE AND THERE IN LONDON," ETC. ETC.

"For these are the men that when they have played their parts, and had their exits, must step out and give the moral of their scenes, and deliver unto posterity an inventory of their virtues and vices."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

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TO

# JOHN CASSELL, ESQ.,

"THE POPULAR EDUCATOR,"

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED, AS A MEMORIAL OF MANY

YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP AND LITERARY

CO-OPERATION.

*Ivy Cottage, Ballard's-lane, Finchley.*

# MODERN STATESMEN.

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## LORD PALMERSTON.

THIS is a great, free, self-governed country. I must believe it, for I read it in the newspapers every day. The aristocracy tell us this when they condescend to adorn our public dinners, and popular lecturers at Mechanics' Institutions and Athenæums repeat it. Our Constitution is the growth of ages, and has attained a perfection of which Hobbes despaired and of which Locke never dreamt. The franchise, we are told, is a trust; that trust is placed in the most trustworthy hands. (Cato was the original ten-pound householder.) Our elections are the envy of surrounding nations. There is at them a studious abstinence from beer; no one is solicited for a vote. The great manufacturer, or railway contractor, or the neighbouring peer, always retire to the Continent when an election takes place, in order that the honest voter may act in accordance

with the dictates of his conscience. The religious feel that it is a solemn event, and sermons appropriate to the occasion are preached in chapel and church alike. The ablest men of the community, irrespective of their wealth or want of it, are selected as candidates. On the day of nomination, in the plain garb of citizens—without music or flags, or demonstrations of party feeling—they appear upon the hustings. Their speeches, in unadorned but plain language, comment upon the men and movements of the day. They declare the principles upon which they act, and upon which they deem the government of Great Britain and its imperial dependencies should be carried on. These speeches, with the exception of a few immaculate boroughs, such as Gloucester and Wakefield or Berwick upon Tweed, are listened to by an audience fresh from the perusal of Bacon, Bentham, and Mill. A show of hands then takes place. The best man has invariably the majority, the others immediately retire, and the constituents, satisfied that they have done their duty, return home; the representative, in his turn, becomes a constituent in another assembly, where he meets some six hundred similarly-minded gentlemen. They select from themselves, in order to form a cabinet, the ablest and wisest. These invariably are peers, or sons of peers. They, again, select the ablest and wisest as their head. He was, till the Crimean war destroyed our European reputation, the first man in the universe, and remotest regions learned to bless his name. Happily, in our

day the system has arrived at a blessed fruition, and we have as Premier the Right Honourable Viscount Palmerston, K.G.C.B., a veteran official long before the present generation bewailed or rejoiced in long clothes.

So much for theory, now for actual fact. Is it not singular that statesmanship as a rule is the only thing monopolised in this country by a class, and that class one which has invariably broken down when it has come into contact with men without grandfathers? From the days of the Huntingdon brewer—not forgetting him who was emphatically "the Great Commoner"—to those of Gladstone and Disraeli, our chief orators and statesmen have sprung from the middle ranks. If Fox belonged to the aristocracy, he confessed that he owed his noblest aspirations to Burke. If England's rulers accepted the services of Canning, they could prey upon his genius and prematurely exhaust his life. In our day we see the Earl of Derby honoured with the Garter on his retirement from the Premiership, while the man without whom his party could not have remained a day in office leaves it, and retires to Haughenden Manor undecorated and without reward. There may be great advantages attending this state of things, but an evident disadvantage is, that this system compels us to accept a kind of Hobson's choice. Hence, when Lord John Russell is sent for, and confesses that he cannot carry on the Queen's Government, and Lord Derby has confessed the same—if Lord Palmerston does not condescend to be our saviour, we are plunged

into the horrors of a parliamentary dead-lock. This is the reason of Palmerston's premiership. He is Premier just as men are villains by necessity and fools by a divine thrusting on. We read in Luther's *Table Talk*, "Maximilian one day burst into a great laugh. On being asked the cause, 'Truly,' he said, 'I laughed to think that God should have trusted the spiritual government of the world to a drunken priest like Pope Julius, and the government of the empire to a chamois-hunter like me.'" We have it in evidence that an idea of this kind used to flash through Lord Althorp's honest brain. In his retirement at Broadlands, Lord Palmerston may indulge in a similar laugh. If we may judge from a public life of unusual extent, the last thing he aspired to was the Premiership. It was offered him, and he could not well refuse it. No man has less gone out of his way to attract or retain the admiration of the people than Lord Palmerston. When he upset Lord John Russell—and, in the language of the turf, began to make a good running—the novelty of the idea was quite refreshing. Palmerston Premier! the thought was absurd. Who were his followers? who would march through Coventry with such a ragged regiment? What ability, save that of consistently sticking to office, had he ever shown? The clever men of a past age—Wilberforce, Plumer Ward, Dean Milner, Canning, and others—it is true, always spoke and wrote of Palmerston as a man of great promise. In the House of Commons, the general opinion was that

Palmerston was a man possibly to be laughed at for his juvenile airs, but certainly not to be despised; but the outside multitude—"the people, the only source of political power"—had no other idea of Palmerston than that he was always in office, that he was one of the best horsemen in Europe, and that he bore a *soubriquet* supposed to indicate an amorous temperament and personal charms. Even writing so recently as 1837, Mr James Grant, in his *Random Recollections*, could say, "Of Lord Palmerston, Foreign Secretary and Member for Tiverton, I have but little to say. The situation he fills in the cabinet gives him a certain degree of prominence in the eyes of the country, which he certainly does not possess in Parliament. His talents are by no means of a high order. Assuredly they would never, by their own natural energy, have raised him to a distinguished position in the councils of his Sovereign, in which a variety of accidental circumstances have placed him. He is an indifferent speaker." This monstrous criticism was accepted at the time as honest and fair. How little do the public know of the men of whom they entertain such decided opinions! Since 1837, Palmerston's career has been a continued triumph: he put on the armour just as other men are putting it off. As a sexagenarian he descended into the political arena, and exhibited all the ardour and vivacity of a youth. Men were first astonished, then enraptured. All England swore by Lord Palmerston. Even the professors of the refined science of

cookery—the disciples of Ude, Carême, Soyer—caught the enthusiasm, and a Palmerston sauce became *en vogue*. In the four quarters of the globe the name of Palmerston was a tower of strength. There was rejoicing at Vienna when Palmerston fell in 1851. In the troubled years of 1848-9 a German popular couplet intimated that if the devil had a son, that favoured mortal was our facetious Premier. "*Suda Palmerston seechas*" (Hither Palmerston, forthwith!), we are told, was during the Crimean war the cry with which the Cossack of the Ukraine stilled his steed when restive, or urged it on when weary. Nay, more, at dinners at Damascus Mr Disraeli makes an Eastern emir pettishly exclaim, "I cannot endure this eternal chatter about Palmerston: are there no other statesmen in the world besides Palmerston?" Even on the other side the Atlantic his influence is felt. I read in an American paper that the recent mad act of Brown and his deluded followers at Harper's Ferry was all owing to Lord Palmerston.

Well, all this abuse is a confession of Palmerston's power, and that is a compliment to the English nation, for the Palmerston policy in the eyes of the world represents English policy, and we love the man who makes all the world talk of what England will do and dare. But in the man himself there is something else which creates and maintains his popularity. In the first place, nature has been bountiful to his lordship, and has given him length of days; this is a greater advantage in statesmanship than at first sight it ap-

pears. A man many years engaged in political affairs learns much—gets an insight into men and parties—quotes precedents and becomes an authority. As he sees his contemporaries and rivals one by one snatched away by death, there is a clearer stage for himself. Promotion often in politics goes by seniority. We all speak of the Marquis of Lansdowne, for instance, as a political Nestor, yet, if we look back to his younger days, when he first started in public life, we do not find that he made a very great impression then; then, again, in many of the fierce party fights of the last generation, Lord Palmerston has been called in to take but a secondary part, his department having been more with foreign than home politics. He has thus rarely come into collision with the passions and prejudices of any powerful class; thus it is that he has had, more than once, we believe, in ministerial crises, advances made to him by the leaders of the Conservative party; and thus it is that he often receives a large share of Conservative support. Then, again, there is a thoroughness in his way of doing business, which we all like. Let him be Home Secretary, let him be Foreign Minister, let him be Premier, he does everything thoroughly and to the best of his power. "When Lord Granville was in the height of his power," writes Horace Walpole, "I one day said to him, 'My lord, as you are going to the king, do ask him to make poor Clive one of the council.' He replied, 'What is it to me who is a judge or who a bishop? It is my busi-

ness to make kings and emperors, and to maintain the balance of power in Europe.'" Now, Lord Palmerston would never have made such a silly answer. When he is at work we soon find out. Whether for work or play, no man can beat his lordship. Is the House of Commons determined to waste its time in idle debates, to abandon its privileges, to promise everything out-of-doors and do nothing in-doors—Lord Palmerston fools them to their heart's content. And then there is a *bonhommie* about his lordship which is popular; a good-tempered, jolly man can never be unpopular. This was the secret of Lord North's success, and of that of a still greater man before him, Sir Robert Walpole. It must be confessed my lord has something to laugh at. What must he think of popular M.P.'s who charge him with treason, and yet dare not vote against him for fear of damaging the shop?

It cannot be that such a one is the nonentity so flippantly portrayed by Mr Grant; the captain of shams, described by Mr Bright; or the arch-traitor sold to Russia, as Mr Urquhart will be happy to tell you any day. Five years ago the writer, meeting with one of the numerous agitators with which the metropolis abounds, requested the enthusiast referred to to explain his movements. "Oh," said he, "we are going to impeach Palmerston!" We suggested the desirability of losing no time if such a course were resolved on. "Oh!" said our informant, "Palmerston will live ten years longer: Russia calculates that

he will do so too." Palmerston lives on, but who is guilty of the folly of talking of impeaching him now?

Voltaire says men succeed less by their talents than their character. As an instance, he compares Mazarin and De Retz. In quoting a passage in a letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, the late Lord Dudley said, "Walpole and Bolingbroke make a similar pair in the next century. Castlereagh and Canning are remarkable examples of the truth of the maxim which our days have furnished." The list might have been extended so as to embrace the career of Lord Palmerston. Undoubtedly the noble lord's talents are of a high order. "We are all proud of him!" said Sir Robert Peel, and the words were caught up and re-echoed all over the land; but it is the character he has acquired that has placed him where he is. It would be the height of absurdity to deny Lord Palmerston the possession of great talent. He has made brilliant speeches; his pro-Catholic orations were republished; and the way in which he put down Julian Harney at Tiverton tickled every midriff in Great Britain. His five-hours' speech in vindication of himself in the House of Commons was a masterpiece. A Conservative member, walking home that night, said to a literary member of Parliament: "I have heard Canning, and Plunkett, and Brougham in their best days, and I never heard anything to beat that speech." Yet our Premier has never scaled the heights of oratory; he has never attained to the utterance of new and preg-

nant truths; genius has never thrown around him her robe of dazzling light; he has been a dexterous debater, skilful at fence, nothing more. Palmerston is but a man of the time, while Pitt and Fox, Burke and Canning, were men for all times. He even ranks below Sir Robert Peel, whose speeches are still quoted and occasionally read. He leaves on you the impression that he is adroit; that he is liberal in profession where Austria and Italy are concerned; that he is grand at bullying little states; and that it is true of him what the first Napoleon said of Providence, that it was always on the side that had the strongest legions. Glance at his lordship's administrative career, and this is manifest. Toryism was popular, and Palmerston began life as a Tory; Reform was popular, and he turned Reformer; war with Russia was popular in 1855, and he became a furious war-minister. In some quarters, lately, people were talking of a further parliamentary reform, and an extension of the suffrage, and Lord Palmerston, who resigned office rather than accede to anything of the kind, condescended to introduce a comprehensive and satisfactory measure of reform, which comprehensive and satisfactory measure was withdrawn quite as readily as it was introduced. This readiness to swim with the stream is a great thing in a statesman. Indeed, in spite of what men may say to the contrary, it is a virtue, if the stream flows in a right direction. But this is not the sole secret of the Premier's popularity. There is another

and more potent cause. An anecdote will best illustrate our meaning :—

Once upon a time two gentlemen went to dine at a noble mansion; on their departure, according to the fashion of the age, the servants were ranged in the hall waiting with extended palm the expected honorarium. The guest who first departed was seen to produce a smile on every countenance as he passed. His friend interrogated him as to the cause, "I gave them nothing," was the reply. "I merely tickled their hands." In a precisely similar manner has Palmerston tickled Englishmen. Undeniably, John Bull is very vain—not of himself, like a Frenchman, but of his nation. The Chinese slave, writing to the Lord of the Sun and the Brother of the Moon of the encounter at Peiho, says, "the barbarians attacked us with their usual insolence and audacity." We have a similar way of speaking of foreigners. "It is a grand country this," exclaims the enthusiastic but grumbling Briton, while he abuses its laws, its customs, its institutions, and its climate. Our aged Premier has spent nearly half a century in repeating this cry for the edification of foreign courts. England has been the model which he has asked France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Russia, to say nothing of countless smaller principalities and powers—no matter the difference of religion, of custom, and of race—to imitate and admire. If, occasionally, the parties thus addressed have shown a little irritation; if, occasionally, an indiscreet Italian,

or Polish, or Hungarian patriot, has in consequence appealed to the sword, believing that England's arm will uphold him in his application of English principles; the fault, of course, is not the noble Viscount's, and the English nation hugs itself into the belief, that the dislike and suspicion of foreign courts and peoples (for the singularity of the Palmerston, or rather the English foreign policy, is, that whilst it is too democratic for foreign courts it is too aristocratic for foreign peoples) is the measure of their respect and fear. Hence the national enthusiasm for Palmerston has placed him on the very topmost pinnacle. Abroad the cry has been, "Palmerston and Constitutionalism!" at home, "Palmerston and the Vindication of the National Honour!" John Bull, even now, when an adventurer and the son of an adventurer, with an audacity almost sublime, has climbed up the steep ascent of empire, and with his armed legions bids all Europe tremble, flatters himself that England sustains to the modern the relation Rome sustained to the ancient world. Under the broad sun of heaven he sees no more exalted personage than himself; he insists upon his rights in the remotest corner of the globe: in the presence of the Pope, whom he deems little better than one of the wicked, under the shadow of the gigantic despot who holds France in his mailed hand, before Austrian Kaiser, Russian Czar, Yankee backwoodsman, or astonished citizen of Timbuctoo, he exclaims, "*Civis Romanus sum!*" In his own opinion, it is his proud

prerogative wherever he wanders to break all laws, to violate all customs, to pour contempt on all prejudices, and to run all risks. Now, in such circumstances Palmerston always backs his countrymen, even when, like Sir John Bowring, they rush wildly into war; and this mischievous John Bullism we all appreciate and admire. Again: under Palmerston's direction we settled the succession in Spain and Portugal, drove away from Syria Mehemet Ali, and blockaded the African coast to put down slavery. People who do not examine matters very closely think it a fine thing to read what an English fleet has been doing at the Tagus, or on the Douro, or on the coast of Africa; or how an English minister has lectured the Bourbons and Hapsburgs, or insulted the representatives of the great republic of the West, or succeeded in lowering the flag of France. That Palmerston has not precipitated the nation into war, argues not so much his discretion as his luck; but the nation that does not see the danger, admires the spirit, and forgets how Palmerston suffered Poland to be blotted out, disdained to assist Hungary, betrayed Sicily, hastened to congratulate Napoleon for erecting an iron despotism on the ruins of a republic, and twice since he was Premier was brow-beaten and bullied by the late idiot King of Naples. But, perhaps, the great secret of the popularity of the Palmerston foreign policy is its utter unintelligibility. Non-interference in what does not concern us is clearly our duty; Lord Palmerston ac-

cepts this, yet he interferes. We are not in a position to go lecturing, yet Palmerston is never happy unless so employed. The Palmerston foreign policy—in reality very much like that of Lord Aberdeen, for since the time of Canning the policy of the Foreign Office has differed but little—has this good about it, that it must weary people of sense of secret diplomacy. The world will move on, its dark places will be made light, its crooked places will be made straight; but if we may judge from the past, not by the manœuvres of diplomacy or the protocols of Lord Palmerston. In his home policy the noble Viscount has been more successful in producing practical results. Here again he has gone at once to the national heart. An Englishman must be comfortable, or he cannot live. The two great ills of life are a smoky chimney and a scolding wife. By Act of Parliament, Lord Palmerston has forbidden the one and has enabled the wretched victim to free himself of the other. This latter Act must always remain a proof of the noble Premier's earnest activity and perseverance. Night after night he and his Attorney-general, Sir Richard Bethell, had to fight the battle alone; a man of feebler will than Lord Palmerston would have given way. When Palmerston became Home Secretary there was another sore evil under the sun: in all our crowded towns population had planted itself most densely in the neighbourhood of the churchyard; the result was, the living were poisoned by the dead. Some of the clergy, fear-

ful of losing their vested interests, opposed the removal of this fearful nuisance, but Lord Palmerston shut up the churchyards as burial-places, and humanity gained the day. His few months at the Home Office were very beneficial to himself, and paved the way for his Premiership. The English public had a nearer view of their pet Foreign Minister; no public duty appeared to come amiss to him; he was weighed in the balance, nor was he found wanting. In 1855, when the Aberdeen cabinet fell, when Lord John Russell had covered himself with odium by his desertion of the sinking ship, all eyes were directed to Lord Palmerston. He was the only possible Premier, and would have remained so had not the Conservatives caught him tripping on the Foreign Conspiracy Bill, and, with the aid of Milner Gibson, defeated a measure which otherwise most probably would have had their support. It must be also confessed, Palmerston required a rebuff. Like Jeshurun of old, he waxed fat and kicked; there was something approaching to insolence in his treatment of the House of Commons.

Lord Palmerston's chief merit is his cheerful honesty. He has made no pretensions to virtue. The *Record* intimated that he was the man of God because he made low Churchmen bishops, but Lord Palmerston himself never laid claim to so sacred a character. He has paid remarkably little deference to an enlightened British public. The lover must blame not his mistress, but himself, when he finds the idol of his fancy plain

and commonplace. Beery readers of newspapers must not complain that their model statesman once resigned office rather than give them votes. The British public dearly love a lord that will take the chair at Exeter Hall. Lord Palmerston began life as Cupid—does not think children tainted with original sin—dared to tell the Scottish clergy that they had better wash than fast to keep off the cholera—was never on the platform at Exeter Hall: yet is he popular. With the exception of once presiding at the distribution of prizes at the University College, London, and a visit to Manchester, he has studiously avoided the arts by which small men become great. The last American traveller who has published a book on us, Mr Field, writes: "An American can hardly believe his senses when he sees the abasement of soul which seizes the middle classes in the presence of a lord. They look up to him as a superior being, with a reverence approaching to awe." There is some truth in this: it is to the credit of Lord Palmerston that he has traded as little on this feeling as it was possible for any man to do.

Come and see Palmerston the Statesman. That is he—that old gentleman in the middle of the Treasury bench of the House of Commons, with hat pulled down tightly over his eyes, arms across his breast, and one leg thrown over the other. Is not he in a capital state of preservation, with nothing to hurt him but now and then a twinge of his old enemy, the gout—a souvenir of jollier years? A wonderful old man, truly; still erect

on horseback as ever youthful knight wending his way to lady's bower. Dr Johnson said of dancing dogs, "the wonder is, not that they dance so well, but that they dance at all;" so with Lord Palmerston, the wonder is, not that he rules the country so well, but that he does it at all, when most men would be in a state of idiotic decay. It says something for the goodness of his lordship's constitution—something for the light character of his labours as a statesman of half a century, and something for the Romsey air and his lordship's medical attendants. But mark! he is on his legs, with all the briskness of a four-year-old. His pertness is quite juvenile. How neat and effective is his retort, and yet how little there is in it! Disraeli said Sir Robert Peel played on the House as an old fiddle, Palmerston does the same. His birth, his office, his experience—all make him feel at home in it; and when he sits down there is a laugh, and the questioner, somehow or other, feels he has done something very foolish, though he scarce knows what. Your expectations are heightened. Very naturally you imagine that as the evening passes on, and the excitement deepens, his lordship, in a corresponding manner, will become earnest, and passionate, and overpowering. Wait a little while, and you will find out your mistake. There is the same pertness and levity; the same eagerness to evade the question by a joke; the same skilful dodging; and the same artful adaptation of his speech, not to the conscience or convictions of the public, but

to the prejudices, and knowledge, and interests of the House. No one so disappoints the eager stranger as Lord Palmerston. His hollow feeble voice—his intolerable haw-hawing—his air of hauteur and flippancy, all combine to dispel the illusion which, in a manner most wonderful, his lordship has contrived to gather around his name.

> "Life is a jest, and all things show it;
> I thought so once, and now I know it,"

will be an appropriate epitaph wherewith to deck the marble monument that the grateful nation shall erect when death shall have torn the wily Premier from the doctor's care. Lord Palmerston, with one memorable exception, never speaks long: he is down almost as soon as he is up, he seldom rises above the level of after-dinner oratory; and as you watch his lordship out of the House at one p.m., at the close of a debate which has tried his lordship's mettle and damaged the handiwork of his lordship's valet, the shambling old gentleman, leaning on a friendly arm, does not seem quite the prodigy in your eyes which the admirably made-up nobleman did, who stepped out of his carriage just as you reached Westminster Hall.

## II.

# LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

On the first of July, 1819, Sir Francis Burdett, for the eighteenth time, made his annual motion on the question of parliamentary reform. All that he proposed was that the House should pledge itself to take the state of the representation into its most serious consideration early in the next session of parliament. On the discussion there appeared 58 members with Sir Francis against 153. Amongst the majority was found the name of Lord John Russell, who, though admitting the propriety of disfranchising such boroughs as were notoriously corrupt, could not support a motion that went the length of proposing an inquiry into the general state of the representation, because such an inquiry was calculated to throw a slur upon the representation of the country, and to fill the minds of the people with vague and indefinite alarms. In a few years after this noted speech, Lord John Russell was at the head of the reforming party in this country, and

there was a general impression gone forth that a grateful nation would elect him dictator for life. Since then he has been said more than once to have politically extinguished himself—a phrase used by thoughtless writers, who forget that you cannot extinguish a certain amount of territory in a territorial system of government. At the present time his lordship is not decidedly unpopular, and as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, coming after the Earl of Malmesbury, and representing English sympathy with the cause of Italian nationality, has a fair chance of becoming, in some quarters, a popular man again.

How has Lord John Russell sunk so low? The inquiry is not uninteresting. In the first place, we think the essential aristocratic nature of the man has something to do with it. To be genial is to be popular. Lord John Russell cannot be genial. There is an icy tone in his voice and glitter in his eye; you may work for him—you may write for him—you may convass for him—you may shout his praises till you are hoarse—and from his lordship you get civil acknowledgment, scarcely that. It is true his lordship is a liberal statesman, but in much the same manner as the Spartan Ephor, who, when charged by his wife with having abandoned half the privileges of his children, replied that he had done so in order that he might preserve for them the other half. Lord John Russell was born a political reformer—just as he is a Protestant. It would never do for the inmates of Woburn Abbey to be

catholicised, and no name is so sacred to the Whigs as that of Russell. Then, again, his lordship has made grievous blunders—has alienated his friends, and given encouragement to his foes. Then, again, the days of strong government, and of the sway of individuals, is gone by. We have leaders, but where are the led? We have officers, but where are the rank and file? It is true Pitt had a majority to his mind. It is true the way in which the country gentlemen, and rotten borough proprietors and representatives, followed that jolly old model Whig, Sir Robert Walpole, into the lobby of the House of Commons, was enough to remind a certain gentleman, who shall be nameless,

> "How Noah and his creeping things
> Went up into the Ark."

It is true that Sir Robert Peel, like a Colossus, bestrode the Protectionist Squires, whom he changed into Free-traders; but these men belong to the past. Men have lost confidence in the judgment and tactics and wisdom of those whom they were wont to call their leaders. The individual allegiance to party of which our fathers boasted, exists no longer. Every man does that which is right in his own eyes. It was not so when his lordship served his political apprenticeship. Then, as the scion of the great Whig Duke, Lord John Russell had a right to expect public patronage and support, and he got it. The stage was clear; all that was requisite was a certain amount of industry. Everywhere the

fable of the tortoise and the hare is realized, but nowhere more so than in the House of Commons. To a friend entering Parliament, Wilberforce said, "Attend to business, and do not seek occasions of display. If you have a turn for speaking, the proper time will come. Let speaking take care of itself. I never go out of the way to speak, but make myself acquainted with the business, and then if the debate passes my door, I step out and join it." We have a similar advice from a still greater man. When Sir George Murray attempted to excuse himself from taking office under the Duke of Wellington, on account of his inexperience in public speaking, "Pho; pho!" said the Duke, "do as I do—say what you think, and don't quote Latin." In accordance with the advice of these men, did Lord John Russell commence his political career. Had he acted more closely in accordance with it his career would have been more successful. But when a second-rate man attempts the part of a first-rate man, we all know what must be the result. It is not then difficult to account for the occasional decline in popularity of Lord John Russell. It is a slander on the public to impute it to the fickleness of the people. The people are prone to idolatry, and a lord on the liberal side is irresistible. Any electioneering agent will tell you it is almost impossible to beat such a man. Lord John Russell especially has little reason to complain; the public have borne with him in the most patient manner; they have picked him out of the mud; they have washed him,

and put clean things on him; they have patted him on the head, and bidden him be a good boy and try again. They have repeated these interesting processes over and over again; they have forgiven him seven times, and seem about to do so seventy times seven; yet Lord John is rarely popular. Indeed, it may be almost hinted that the whole career of England's constitutional and heroic statesman has been a mistake. Lord John is by birth the son of one duke and the brother of another. In his youth he associated with the Edinburgh Reviewers, and learnt the *quantum sufficit* of Liberal slang. He has been an unfortunate man through life —always hard up—always out of luck. He wrote a novel that did not sell—a history that no one would read. His philosophy was equally worthless, and his poetry—he wrote a drama—was (the word is harsh, but we really can find no other so fitting)—his poetry was positively damned. Thus abhorred by gods and men, he became a politician, and had a finger in that dainty dish, the Reform Bill, by which the people of England were deluded and deceived. The only thing that can be said of him positively is, that, as it may be said of the great Bedford Flat, he has the questionable merit of being connected with the Bedford family. He belongs to the people as Johnson's friend, Campbell, belonged to the Church. "Campbell," said Johnson, "is a good man, a very good man. I fear he has not been inside of a church for many years, but he never passes one without taking his hat off. That shows, at

least, that he has good principles." Lord John omits no opportunity of professing proper attachment to the people, whilst the whole course of his political life makes that profession doubtful. He serves them in the same way as that in which Scrub serves the ladies in the farce when commissioned by them to obtain information as to the stranger they had seen at church. He tells them he has a whole packet of news. "In the first place," says he, "I inquired who the gentleman was? They told me he was a stranger. Secondly, I asked what the gentleman was? They answered and said, that they never saw him before. Thirdly, I inquired what countryman he was? They replied, 'twas more than they knew. Fourthly, I demanded whence he came? Their answer was, they could not tell. And fifthly, I asked whither he went? and they replied, they knew nothing of the matter." To the people, thus clamorous to reform, Lord John gives as much welcome intelligence as Scrub did to the ladies. He has a whole packet of reform and retrenchment, if they will but wait; but it is not meant for use. It is never ready when it is wanted. He is a Whig, a Reformer, a friend of the people, an advocate of progress. He does not deny but that further reforms might be made—he is very indignant at being suspected of finality; yet somehow or other, it does happen that every attempt made in that direction meets with the most unscrupulous opposition of Lord John and the party whom he represents. He does not think much of Mr Cobden's

plea for retrenchment, and arbitration instead of war. He has but a poor opinion of the ballot, he scornfully eschews household suffrage, and the five points he cannot abide. Now Lord John's presence in the Cabinet is said to be a guarantee for the carrying of a Reform Bill. As usual, Lord John is much too late. He would be a party to no reform when Hume and the rest were urging him to move with the times, and now the people have been so often duped and disappointed by promises of a Reform Bill, that it really seems as if they were becoming apathetic in the matter.

Again, through a long parliamentary life, Lord John has been little and spiteful, and troublesome in opposition. In his diary, Tom Moore wrote of his lordship, that "he was mild and sensible" on a particular occasion, but sometimes his lordship has been neither the one nor the other. Moore regretted that Lord John Russell "showed so little to advantage in society from his extreme taciturnity, and still more from his apparent coldness and indifference to what was said to him." This coolness and indifference, combined with no small opinion of himself, has often led his lordship into conduct which has made him very unpopular. When in this state, and expelled from office, he has not had strength of mind sufficient to lead him calmly to wait till the nation has called him back to the helm of state, but he has tried all sorts of contemptible manœuvres. Never can we forget the appropriation clause which he

carried to unseat Sir Robert Peel, and then abandoned when in power. Lord John called "the repeal of the corn laws mischievous, absurd, impracticable, and unnecessary;" yet his Edinburgh letter in favour of their abolition was hastily written and published when he found that his great rival, Sir Robert Peel, was about to take steps in the direction of Free Trade. In his opposition to the budget of Sir Robert Peel, it is questionable whether the force of meanness could further go. Then what a mischievous attempt, on his lordship's part, to acquire popularity was the Durham Letter, and how fatal the rebound. Lord John's "spirited letter" certainly led the nation to open its eyes. That a Minister who had long been suspected of designing to endow the Roman Catholic Church should have written such a letter, was very surprising; but that after writing that letter he should have cooled down; that after roaring like a lion he should have aggravated his voice and roared like a nightingale, was more surprising still. The old adage of "much cry and little wool" was never more ludicrously realized. In the name of the prophet, exclaimed his lordship, with pompous strut and voice,—In the name of the prophet—figs! The contrast between his letter and his legislation—between his speech and his bill—was as wide as that between Philip drunk and Philip sober; or as that between

> "Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
> With Sappho fragrant at an evening mask."

If Popery be what Lord John said in his speech it

was—if it be a curse in every country in which it exists; and if legislation can grapple with it,—then the bill was delusive, and a mockery. Lord John, in his speech, complained of synodical action. The bill left that untouched. The greatest condemnation of Lord John's bill was Lord John's speech. Disraeli could say nothing stronger against it than what his lordship himself implied. The truth was, to gain a little transient popularity, or to draw off public attention from the growing cry for further Financial and Parliamentary Reform, the First Minister of the Crown stooped to a line of conduct of which the veriest demagogue might have been ashamed. An intense anti-Catholic feeling was aroused. From almost every county and town—from almost every sect and class—petitions went forth expressing burning indignation at the foolish aggression of the Pope. To whatever an Englishman is indifferent, he is not to the growth of the power which in time past lit up the fires of Smithfield, or the *auto da fe's* of Goa and Madrid, or which, even at the present day, condemns to the degradation of the jail the lover of his country and his kind. Under the influence of that feeling, men steeped in everlasting infamy—such as Titus Oates, or Sacheverell, or Lord George Gordon—have strutted on the stage the heroes of an hour. A wise Minister would have paused ere that feeling was rashly excited. A wise Minister would have considered his power of controlling the storm ere he had bidden it ride forth. A wise Minister, before he put him-

self in collision with a system, the influence of which exists in every land, would have kept for himself a way of coming out of the strife victorious. Lord John Russell signally failed in doing this. All that he did by his bill was to proclaim a weakness it had been easy to conceal, and to put in bolder relief the magnitude of Papal pretences and the littleness of Ministerial legislation. His letter was a sham. He but touched upon the surface of the evil, and that in a manner not difficult to evade. In all its intensity, the evil remains the same. "With our pleasant vices we make the whips with which we scourge ourselves." That Ecclesiastical Title Bill sealed Lord John's career as Premier. To retain office he had to descend from that lofty position. Under the Aberdeen Administration he committed a similar mistake. A public system had broken down; a magnificent army had wasted away. By many an English fireside was it told how in that winter there had been, far away, a tragedy done unequalled in the worst days of official mismanagement, as criminal as any of the Walcheren and other forlorn efforts of the past. From one end of England to the other, wherever man met man, whether in the haunts of fashion or of business, whether at home or abroad, there were curses uttered, deep and loud, against the men responsible for these disasters. Parliament met; it was known that the first thing required would be the appointment of the Sebastopol Committee. Of course that was a vote of censure on the existing ad-

ministration; but instead of calmly awaiting the vote, and endeavouring to defend himself and his colleagues, Lord John had the littleness to abandon his post, and to cast stones at the men with whom he had sat at the council-board. Again, in his haste to appear before the world, he rushed to Vienna, there still further to be duped and rendered ridiculous. That his lordship, as he grows older, does not grow wiser, is clear from his having had recourse to his old tactics only the session of parliament before the last. Reform was a matter of such vital importance that it could not be trusted in the hands of the Derby Cabinet; only Lord John Russell could deal with such a delicate subject. Lord John moved his memorable resolutions. Lords Palmerston and Russell forgot their ancient feuds and swore eternal friendship; the liberal rank and file followed suit; the Derby administration was rejected; and as a practical result, reform was delayed—may I write *in secula seculorum?*

It may be asked, is his lordship's oratory of so fascinating a character as for a time to render the House of Commons blind to his many faults? By no means. Look at him marching into the lobby—frigid, dwarfed, and self-complacent. For such a man there can be no real enthusiasm on the part of those who know him. See him in the House—always equally cold and chilling, and civil to all around. Follow him to the platform and the hustings, he is the same repellant, unattractive Whig. But he has lived for the House of Commons, and the House is not ungrateful. To Lord

John also is due the merit of having led the House efficiently in time past. In this respect his tact was only equalled by that of his great rival, Sir Robert Peel; and in knowledge of forms and precedents by many he was considered the superior of that distinguished man. There was really something grand in the aspect of the House under his leadership. It was a remarkable instance of the triumph of mind over matter. In a crowded House, at the close of a heated debate, you would see the smallest man in the House advance to the table, and the noise of the House, and the murmur of many voices, was hushed and still; the opposition became attentive; strangers would lean forward their heads; peers and diplomatists would hearken. Seemingly careless and slovenly, the speech would be found to contain the right amount of liberalism to go down with the back benches; parts would be elaborately polished, and sparkle with a quiet irony which the audience would not be slow to appreciate, nor reluctant to apply.

Lord John has much to contend with. His outward form is frail and weakly; his countenance sicklied over with the effects of solitary communing; his figure shrunk below the ordinary dimensions of humanity; his general air that of a meditative invalid. But within that feeble body is a spirit that knows not how to cower, an undaunted heart, an aspiring soul. His voice is weak, his accent drawling and provincial, his elocution broken, stammering, and uncertain, save in a

few lucky moments, when his tongue seems unloosed, when he becomes logical, eloquent, and terse. Then is his right hand convulsively clenched, his head proudly thrown back, the outline of his face becomes rigid, and his dwarfed figure expands as if he were a giant. Lord John is sometimes very happy, as when, in his letter to the electors of Stroud, he declared that "the whisper of a faction shall not prevail against the voice of a nation;" or when, in answer to Sir Francis Burdett, who charged him with the cant of patriotism, he told the baronet there was also such a thing as the recant of patriotism. One of Lord John's most celebrated speeches is that known as the Aladdin Lamp Speech, delivered by his lordship in 1819, and which Sir Robert Peel read to the House during the debate on the Reform Bill, in 1831. "Old Sarum," said Lord John, "existed when Somers and the great men of the revolution established our government. Rutland sent as many members as Yorkshire, when Hampden lost his life in defence of the constitution. If we should change the principles of our constitution, we should commit the folly of the servant in the story of Aladdin, who was deceived by the cry of 'New lamps for old!' Our lamp is covered with dust and rubbish, but it has a magical power; it has raised up a smiling land, not bestrode with overgrown palaces, but covered with modest dwellings, every one of which contains a freeman enjoying equal protection with the proudest subject in the land. It has called into life all the busy creations of commercial

prosperity. Nor, when men were to defend and illustrate their country, have such men been deficient. When the fate of the nation depended on the line of policy which she should adopt, there were orators of the highest degree placing in the strongest light the arguments for peace or war. When we decided upon war, we had nerves to gain us laurels in the field and wield our thunders in the sea. When again we returned to peace—the questions of internal policy, of education of the poor, of criminal law, found men ready to devote the most splendid of abilities to the well-being of the community. And shall we change an instrument, that has produced effects so wonderful, for a burnished and tinsel toy of modern manufacture? No; small as the remaining treasure of the constitution is, I cannot consent to throw it into the wheel for the chance of obtaining a prize in the lottery of revolution." Let me add, that in debate Lord John is always a gentleman; not merely are his sentences and phrases indicative of polish and refinement, but he is always courteous, never flippant, like Lord Palmerston, nor savage, like Mr Disraeli.

We are standing in the lobby of the House of Commons, watching the members enter. We have watched the flowing stream, it may be half an hour, when a small, neat figure passes by. Every one looks at him, and you do the same, when you hear it whispered, "That is Lord John Russell." His lordship is elderly, he has had a seat in the House of Commons since 1813; but he shows few signs of age,

He is one of England's chiefs; and by his lofty bearing, and the sparkle in his eye, you would fancy he is quite aware of the fact. Reaumur, in his book on "England," describes his lordship: "A little man, with a refined and intelligent though not imposing air." A malicious Quarterly Reviewer, in a voluntary translation of the same passage, rendered it, "A little, sharp, cunning-looking man, with nothing of an imposing presence." I think both are wrong. Lord John Russell looks the aristocrat as much as any man I have seen. Up in the strangers' gallery, however, you lose this appearance, on account of the distance at which you are placed from his lordship. It is true he is seated on the Treasury Bench; but he sits with his chin buried in his bosom, his head buried in his hat, and all that you can really see, as he sits cross-legged, and with his arms across his breast, are his diminutive extremities. See, he rises to address the House. Slowly he lifts off his hat, advances to the table, crosses his arms, and, in a brogue somewhat provincial, and not very musical, says "Mr Speaker." All at once the Babel of conversation, the shuffling, coughing, laughing, and talking, is a little hushed. He commences; it is an important question he has to answer, or an important declaration he has to make, and you may hear a pin drop. You hear a weak voice hammering and stammering at every four or five sentences, those sentences often most slovenly and inelegant in construction, and, at first, you wonder how a man, without figure, voice, delivery,

or fluency, could become the leading orator of the House of Commons; but, as he goes on—as he courteously replies to one, and administers a sly sarcasm to another—as his little frame dilates, and his eye sparkles—as he warms, and the House with him, you will feel that the little man has more in him than at first appeared. Read the speech next morning, and you will find how closely to the point it was—how exactly calculated to the occasion—how it suited the atmosphere of the House, and then you must remember how cool and unruffled was the speaker, and what tact he displayed. In these latter respects Lord John has greatly shone, and has evinced a smartness of which you would not suspect him as you listen to his drawling tones, and witness his slovenly delivery.

In one of his numerous works, Lord John Russell says that the House of Commons, while it admires a man of genius, always gives its confidence to a man of character. It is on his character that Lord John takes his stand. Character, as we all know, is one of the most delusive phrases in the English language; one man may steal a sheep, while another may not look over a wall. Half the scoundrels that are tried at the Old Bailey were, like Redpath, and Sir John Paul, and others, men of good character. A good character is the *dernier resort* of a man who has little or nothing else to recommend him. And Lord John Russell certainly has made no little capital out of his character, and that of the great family to whose history he adds an-

other very interesting page. Herein is Lord John Russell's speciality. He takes his stand upon his character. He had a good character twenty or thirty years ago, and he reaps the benefit of it at this moment. "So long as your father sticks to that ugly wife of his, and goes regularly to church," said Erskine to the Prince of Wales, "he will always be popular;" and Lord John has gained much of his popularity in a similar way. What a man he is for public meetings! How familiar are Exeter Hall, and the Freemasons' Tavern, and the City of London Tavern, with his name. How amusing is that account Mrs Stowe gives of her visit to his lordship at Pembroke Lodge. "We were received," she writes, "in the drawing-room by the young ladies. Two charming little boys came in, and a few moments after their father, Lord John. I had been much pleased with finding on the centre table a beautiful edition of the revered friend of my childhood, Dr Watts's Songs, finely illustrated. I remarked to Lord John that it was the face of an old friend. He said it was presented to his little boys by their godfather, Sir George Grey. And when, taking one of these little boys on his knee, he asked him if he could repeat me one of his hymns, the whole thing seemed so New England-like that I began to feel myself quite at home."

"Private vices," says Mandeville, "are frequently public benefits." Is not the converse true, and are not private virtues public mischiefs? "George the Third's constancy to his wife and his shoulder of mutton,"

wrote Albany Fonblanque, in the palmy days of the Examiner, "his taste for regularity and simplicity, enabled him to plunge us into wasting, unjust, and unnecessary wars. Had he kept various concubines, and dined off French dishes at nine o'clock, the people would have had a lively perception of the depravity of his politics, and an intimate persuasion of their wrongs."

I confess that, to myself, Lord John Russell seems more an historical than a real flesh and blood at this day existing man. His was a name dear to the nation, and always received with delight, when the men and women of to-day played with dolls and marbles, and feasted on indigestible pastry. I remember well the almost idolatrous veneration with which he was worshipped by reformers, and that large and influential class, the Protestant Dissenters, whose unrighteous shackles, by means of the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts, he had been the means of removing. In that era, Lord John was deemed the champion of what was much talked of then, civil and religious liberty all the world over.

> "We have changed (for worse or better?)
> Since the time of Charlemagne."

And I have lived to see the House of Commons grow restive under his leadership, his followers diminished, and the country, if not weary of, at any rate very indifferent to, the man. I fear gratitude can never be a permanent state of the mind, unless, as in O'Connell's

acceptation of the term, a sense of thankfulness for favours to come; or rather, that the law of humanity is, that when a man has done his work and taken his wages, he should trouble us no more. It is not the individual that makes revolutions. The age makes them, and merely honours an individual as an agent. We should have had Parliamentary Reform had Lord John Russell never lived; and the Test and Corporation Acts, and the Slave Trade, would have been swept away in a similar manner. These changes are made when the time for them has arrived. The statesman who carries them is in reality carried by them. He is merely the servant of the public, and translates, with legislative enactment, the wants, and wishes, and convictions of the age. Had Lord John Russell realized this truth, he would never have lost himself by talking of finality, as if in this world of eternal change finality could be predicated of any one thing. *Mors janua vitæ*, death is the gate to life, is true in politics; reform is a never-ending process. The old Whig view is different. It is the man who covers the land with plenty—who removes evil—who admits the *profanum vulgus* to a limited suffrage, and who reaps his reward in the blessings of ages yet to come. But to any man who looks at the core of things, who seeks to know the causes of what may seem revolutionary changes, and who remembers the influence of an oligarchy, it is clear that if Lord John had never lived, some other scion of the noble house of Bedford would have done that which

he has done, and, if of equal industry and devotion to public life, would have formed as material a part of a liberal cabinet. The conclusion, if not flattering to his lordship, is very much so to his lordship's order, and especially to his family, indicating, as it does, the rigidity and fixedness of what is called a popular system of government.

Tennyson makes Ulysses say,

> "Old age hath yet his honour and his toil."

Similar language might be put into the mouth of Lord John Russell. He is full of what may be termed House of Commons knowledge. If his lordship has been ambitious, his has been no mean or contemptible ambition. His aspirations have all been of an ancient and heroic mould. He carries us back to the great days of Parliamentary eloquence. His principles were formed, and his habits acquired, and his style fashioned, on principles and persons now no longer known. He has still around him some of the lustre acquired by contact with the immortals. Mournfully he may exclaim, as he reviews his diminished *prestige* and fading power,

> "Much have I seen and known; cities of men,
> And manners, climates, councils, governments,
> Myself not least, but honoured of them all,
> And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
> Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy."

In the decline of his lordship's reputation there is reason for national regret. When he trips and falls, the feeling created is one of sorrow and vexation.

Lord Sydenham declared that his lordship was "the noblest man he had ever the good fortune to know;" and through the old hosts he led to victory the statesmen who were proud to call themselves his followers—the public speakers and active politicians in our chief towns and cities, who stood by his side on many a platform, are gone never to return. We wistfully gaze still on the pluck and ambition and varied fortunes of his lordship. The nation cannot but sympathize in his lordship's decline and fall. There was a time when manners and fashions were more courtly and dignified than at present; when gentlemen wore wigs and knee-breeches; when ladies did not dance the polka; when fathers and sons addressed each other in the most distressingly respectful language. Lord John, in political life, retains something of this grand air, which always tells, just as what the actors say about a man who lays hands on a woman is a brute, is approved by the gods, who return home and whop their wives with a double gusto after cheering so virtuous a sentiment. In his character of a Roman Senator Lord John is always successful. The strangers in the gallery are always delighted, and no wonder, for then the little figure draws itself up to its full height; the eye glistens; the husky voice becomes animated and tremulous with emotion; his lordship looks boldly round on admiring back benches, defiantly to the well-filled ranks of opposition in front, and you would swear that he was at least six feet high.

## III.

# RICHARD COBDEN, M.P.

For a few years previous to the Crimean war, when the public in general believed that white-robed peace had taken up an eternal residence among the sons of men, the name of Richard Cobden was one everywhere received with respect. Sir Robert Peel had testified to the power of his "unadorned eloquence." The exasperation of rosy-cheeked country squires, not gifted with great oratorical powers, had subsided almost into a calm as they found that the alteration of the Corn-Laws had impaired neither their influence nor their wealth. The manufacturing interests had, in a substantial manner, by a subscription of £80,000, testified their value of Mr Cobden's services. The hero of the Anti-Corn-Law League, the opponent of the Taxes on Knowledge, the champion of the ballot, the Coryphæus of the Peace party, the *decus et tutamen* of the Freehold Land Societies, had only to show himself to his countrymen to be regaled with the most vehement ap-

plause. In Exeter Hall, in St Martin's Hall, at the Freemason's Tavern, at the City of London Tavern, at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester,—in short, in all the haunts and homes of popular agitation, honours were plentifully showered on the man who had commenced his political career as an obscure Manchester cotton dealer; who, by his wonderful tact, had won from a hostile senate the triumph of Free Trade, and whose very name was received on the continent as the embodiment — politically speaking — of English thought and feeling. A plain citizen never achieved a higher pinnacle of greatness. A revolution in its consequences, even at this distance of time not to be over-estimated, and as yet but partially developed, had been effected mainly by his agency. In old Rome, when Tiberius Gracchus headed a movement against the landed aristocracy, the result was a sudden and bloody death. In modern England the popular tribune meets with a happier fate. But this popularity was too great to last. When the Russian war broke out, Mr Cobden's protest against it lowered him in public estimation. His conduct in the Chinese affair —when an old ally, Sir John Bowring, was condemned unheard—rendered him still more unpopular; and the clever appeal of Lord Palmerston to the country for awhile sent Mr Cobden, politically speaking, to Coventry. It is a long lane that knows no turning. If Englishmen are ungrateful it is only for a season. When the passions and prejudices of the hour had

passed, men of all opinions felt that, Cobden not in Parliament, that assembly was deprived of some portion of its lustre. To the honour of Rochdale be it said, that was the borough that, at the earliest opportunity, returned Mr Cobden to his proper place; and when the latter returned from America, where he had been sojourning a while, it was to find that not only was he once more an M. P., but that a seat in the Cabinet waited his acceptance. Still more, he has lived to see it a matter of national regret that he did not join the Cabinet, and add right honourable to his name. In the case of Mr Cobden we have a clear illustration of the axiom that it is the age that makes the man. When Cobden entered on public life, commerce was in need of a mouthpiece to assert her importance and to demand her rights. English country gentlemen had governed the country in accordance with the fancied interests of English country gentlemen. How to keep up the rent was the problem to be solved. That the time would ever arrive when the farmers would be scientific, and have a fair command of capital, and be enabled to pay higher rents and make more money under a system that did not prohibit the introduction of foreign corn, never entered into the heads of the landed class. England was growing to be the workshop of the world. From the backwoods of Canada, from distant Chicago, from the banks of the Danube, from the vast corn districts of Southern Russia, there came a voice saying, "Give

us your manufactures and take our corn. So will your poor have work, so will your hungry be fed, so shall commerce more effectually bind us in the golden cords of peace." In Manchester, in Birmingham, in Sheffield and Leeds, where men live by the production of mechanism and manufacture, this truth was clearly and painfully felt. But it was only till within the last few years that the political existence of Manchester, and Birmingham, and Sheffield, and Leeds, had been admitted by our governing classes. Huskisson was beginning to see the truth in these matters, but the sudden termination of his lamented life left the commercial classes almost friendless and alone in the Senate. The landlords ruled the roast, and administered the game laws, and believed with Malthus that society had a tendency to advance beyond the means of subsistence, and stood aghast at the ever-increasing mass of pauperism, a terror by night and by day in their midst. The pious recommended resignation, the intelligent began to inquire how it was that life was such a curse, that here there was abundance, there, starvation. They found that our Corn-Laws produced much of this mischief; that the time had come for England to burst her chains, and take tremendous strides, or to be for ever fallen. At this crisis Richard Cobden arose. He had been a Manchester manufacturer; he was now to be the utterance of the wants and wishes of the age. The best years of his life he devoted to that work, and the splendid testimonial subscribed to

him by the people of England at the termination of the Anti-Corn-Law agitation was but a poor equivalent for the pecuniary losses he had sustained by renouncing a successful mercantile career. Even a subsequent pecuniary subscription, on the occasion of his losses by his American investments, was but a small per centage on the progress made by the subscribers under Free Trade.

Is it not time that we begin to understand history? The one great fact taught by wars, and rebellions, and revolutions of all kinds; by the decline and fall of Rome, by the collapse of French monarchies, by the growth of English freedom, by the spread of Anglo-Saxon institutions in America and Australia; is that, by fair means or foul, every twenty-four hours a man must dine. Understand this, and the past ceases to be a mighty maze without a plan. Understand this, and history is no longer a riddle. Understand this, and the curtain is drawn up and you see living men. Our statesmen and historians use fine phrases, but they have no meaning, and merely darken and perplex. For instance, who, besides a professed statesman, or newspaper writer, or Edinburgh Reviewer, ever cared a straw about the balance of power in Europe? Men are not moved by such phantoms. Yet, if you read history, you would think that millions of men have died, and millions of money have been squandered about an unmeaning phrase. The simple fact was, that in France people got hungry, and did

not know how to satisfy their hunger without upsetting a monarchy. In 1816 we had a bad harvest, and the result was a Reform Bill; a few years later the potato crop failed in Ireland, and we had Free Trade. Life is too short and people are too busy to go to war, for the grand reasons given by the historian, or embodied in state papers. In ordinary life the hottest politician is a plain, plodding tradesman, taking care of the pence, and civil to his customers. In the same manner the ordinary life of a nation is devoted to its material interests. If it be otherwise, there is something wrong. Perhaps Mr Cobden understands this truth better than any man living. His perception of it has been the secret of his success and the pole-star of his life. In developing this idea, he makes sad havoc of old notions and party cries. An M.P. present in the House when Canning made that famous speech about calling the new world into existence, to redress the balance of the old, said: "While he was speaking, Mr Canning seemed actually to have increased in stature, his attitude was so majestic, his chest heaved and expanded, his nostril dilated; a noble pride slightly curled his lip, age and sickness were forgotten, and dissolved in the ardour of youthful genius." Cobden would never—could never—have produced such an effect. Had he been in Canning's situation, had he held the reins of power, his eye would have sparkled, and his breast would have expanded, and his whole frame would have quivered with emotion;

not that he had called into existence some half-dozen of the most accursed governments under the sun (for such Canning's emancipated colonies turned out), but that he had won for the toiling masses of his countrymen a right to earn their daily bread. Undoubtedly that is the primary need. Without that right achieved, no nation can be prosperous, or renowned, or great. It is not in utter poverty that the Graces love to dwell. Where the struggle for existence is bitter and all-absorbing, there is no morality, no intelligence, no civilization worthy of the name, and man is but little better than a brute. A nation may fight to revenge the wrongs of oppressed nationalities, but ere it does this, it must have done its duty to itself.

Yet, in the middle classes nine men out of ten tell you what a pity it is that Mr Cobden has so lost himself by his peace crotchets. It is true he has said many things, and some of them not wise ones. A man who has made as many speeches as Mr Cobden has done, is pretty sure, occasionally, to fall into blunders. In the heat and excitement of great struggles, things are said which turn out to be utter folly, yet the speakers of them are not set down as fools. The Duke of Wellington said it would be madness in him to think of being prime minister, yet directly after he attained that exalted rank. You could almost always tell when Sir Robert Peel was about to turn by the solemnity and vehemence with which he asserted he was not. Did not Sir Robert Inglis prophesy that ten

years after the Reform Bill was carried, the House of Peers and the State Church would be destroyed, and England would be turned into a republic? Did not he say he would be afraid to trust the Bible to the people unless it was in the hands of the clergy of the Church of England? and yet the man who could thus doubt the truth and power of the Bible as it stands by itself, and could thus insanely prophesy, was, to the very last, representative of an English University. Lord Eldon upheld the most disgraceful and sanguinary criminal code in Europe, and for years he was worshipped as the wisest of mankind. Many of our leading statesmen took an active part in opposing the Corn-Laws, and predicted the most disastrous results. We do not sneer at them, but Mr Cobden and the champions of industrial rights are taunted everlastingly when they blunder, as if no other men did the same. For them and them alone there are no waters of Lethe. Surely this is hard measure. Public opinion in this country is led by the aristocracy, and they, of course, very naturally look upon the Cobden class with more or less disfavour, but the disfavour of the Manchester school is to be attributed to a deeper source. Old Hobbes tells us man naturally is in a state of war. The Manchester school ignore this primary fact, and thus runs counter to the universal instincts of our race. War is a folly, a crime, a curse, but men have always fought nevertheless; and now, when all Europe resounds with the measured tread of armed men, more distant than

ever seems the day when the war-drum shall throb no longer,

> "And the battle flag be furl'd
> In the parliament of man, in the federation of the world."

Now Mr Cobden's Peace speeches have not merely been falsified, but have been distasteful as well. Thus, when in a speech at Wrexham, in 1850, Mr Cobden said he would rather cut down the expenditure for military establishments to ten millions, and run every danger from France or any other quarter, than risk the danger of attempting to keep up the present standard of taxation and expenditure, common sense tells us that the real question is one of national safety, and not of expense. If our war expenditure in time past had been greater we should have saved money now, as it is clear that our neglect in this respect has stimulated in other quarters increased activity. Mr Cobden, in the same speech, said he believed there never was an instance known in the history of the world of as many as 50,000 men being transported across the salt waters within 12 months. It is true he cannot say that now, but the inference remains. In the same way he argues against a French invasion, because he and his family happen to have a comfortable domicile in Paris. No man better than Mr Cobden can be blind to what he does not wish to see. Knowing the immense material advantage to England and France of peace, he can see nothing in the immense naval preparations of that country—nothing in such fortifications as Cherbourg—

nothing in the invective, which under the license of the government was launched forth in French Journals against perfidious Albion. "The pacific genius of the house of Pelham was not unknown to France, and fell in very conveniently with their plan of extensive empire," writes Horace Walpole, in his "Memoirs of the Reign of George II." Is not the passage applicable to Mr Cobden? The Peace party and Mr Cobden, in the same way, undoubtedly had much to do with that miserable Crimean war. The late Czar, I have no doubt, imagined that Mr Cobden and the Peace party represented England, and that under no circumstances whatever would she go to war. The late Czar saw an old ally at the head of affairs. He saw Mr Cobden, the mouth-piece of thousands, representing all war as absurd. He saw Peace Congresses perambulating the land, and he knew that the prime movers of them, the Quakers, were men who if smitten on one cheek would meekly turn the other, and await the blow. He saw that we had allowed him to trample Hungary under-foot—that we had been silent when Poland was blotted from the map of nations—that wildly and viciously Protestant as we were, we had allowed the Pope to be re-seated on his tottering throne by the aid of French bayonets; and might he not well think that so reckless had we become of our ancient prestige—so absorbed had we grown in the pursuit of wealth—so permeated had we been by Manchester oratory and Peace tracts, that scarcely the dictates of

self-preservation—certainly not the claims of humanity or the obligations of treaties, or the considerations of an enlightened public policy, or the cause of an effete race, whose very existence in Europe was an anomaly—would induce us again ever to draw the sword? The Peace party themselves helped to create this confusion. Everybody wished them well, and soldiers and sailors were at a discount. Most of them, simple-minded, good-meaning folk, fell very naturally into the error of mistaking their select assemblies of neat Quakeresses and verdant youths for the people of England. When Mr Bradshaw, of the "Guides," died,—a decent man I doubt not, but not known to the nation in any capacity whatever beyond that of his trade,—I myself heard Joseph Sturge at a public meeting at Edinburgh exclaim that there were more tears shed when the nation heard of the death of Mr Bradshaw than when the hero of Waterloo died. Now in England we simply laugh at such an assertion. But in Russia they could not see its absurdity. And the Czar having seen that in one agitation Mr Cobden had represented the will of the nation, fell into the very easy error of supposing that on the question of Peace as well as that of Free Trade, Mr Cobden was similarly backed. Still more may be urged against Mr Cobden. The war having once begun—Quaker Sturge having travelled to St Petersburg, bearing the olive branch in vain—he should have remembered that he was an Englishman, and having lifted up his warning voice and find-

ing it disregarded, should not have condescended to seek to bring about the national disasters he had predicted. It is clear that a nation once committed to a war—any arraignment of the policy of that war—any attempt to embarrass the parties engaged in carrying it on—any endeavour to make it unpopular with the nation at large —is, to a certain extent, aiding the power with which you are at war. Had Mr Cobden thus acted in the House of Commons, he could have been met and refuted on the spot, but the real truth is, while he was silent there he was mischievously active out of doors. He helped to prolong the war in the same manner as the Jacobites in 1696 helped to prolong the war with Louis the Great. Macaulay tells us Louis was inclined for peace. After the failure of the Assassination Plot he had made up his mind to the necessity of recognising William Prince of Orange as king of England, and had authorized Callieres to make a declaration to that effect, but the Jacobites in London wrote to the Jacobites in St Germain's such tales of the distresses of the country—of its exhaustion and the unpopularity of the Prince, that, to the great joy of the non-jurors, Callieres became high and arogant, and denied that William was anything more than a pretender to the throne. Mr Cobden acted precisely in the same manner. Of course I give him credit for the best of motives, and believe that he is as honest and sincere a patriot as any man living, but if he wishes to be popular he must give up his peace crotchets. He is strong enough to be able to say, "I,

in common with the wise and good of the British nation, have blundered, and find the Millennium of peace further off than I dreamed." All men deprecate war. Mr Cobden must not believe that he and the men in drab are the only friends to peace. As sincerely and passionately as Mr Cobden himself, we believe, do our leading statesmen long for peace: but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the course of events has placed us in the foremost files of time—that we may not stand in despicable isolation, printing calicoes and jingling guineas, while the strong are trampling on the weak, and robbery is being attempted at our very doors. Sure are we that when the nation shall have stooped to take so mean a view of its vocation, its glory will have departed, and the period will have arrived when the famous picture of Macaulay shall be realized, and the stranger from New Zealand, standing on Westminster-bridge, and contemplating the ivied ruins of St Paul's, shall mark the traces of a greatness that has passed away. The spirit that animates the nation in a righteous war is a noble one. Humanity has shone brightest at such periods. It would require the most profound ignorance of history for a man to assert that the contests which gave the victories of Marathon and Salamis to the Greeks—that roused up in the Middle Ages the followers of the Crescent and the Cross—that triumphed at Waterloo—that crushed the Indian revolt—were among the least illustrious events that occupy and adorn the annals of the world. Mr Cobden is unfortunate when he ap-

peals to history. About eighty years since, our statesmen were after his own heart. Our national income was unequal to our peace establishment; our navy was a "visionary fabric;" our troops were not sufficient to be of any service; Frederic the Great had civilly declined the overtures of Mr Fox; we had attempted to patch up an ignominious peace; yet a War Minister came into office, and never did the nation achieve a wider reputation, or wield a more irresistible power.

Mr Cobden, like Mr Bright, underrates the influence of the landed aristocracy, and he is too willing to believe that the public is an enlightened body, acting solely from a sense of its own interests. The truth is, that the public, whether of France or England, is very often the dupe of its passions and fancies, and that in England, whatever may be done occasionally by dwellers in cities, the real power is in the hands of the land-owners. He and Mr Bright also take it for granted that we have a party in this country who wish to go to war; a bigger blunder it is impossible to make.

"What do you think of Cobden?" said the writer to a large Norfolk farmer, after the former had been delivering an address in the fine old hall of the county town. "Why," said he, "I believe if Cobden had held up a sheet of white paper and told us it was black we should all have sworn the same thing." This answer may be accepted as a fair description of Cob-

den as a speaker. By his appearance he disarms all prejudices. You see a man of middle size, very plainly dressed, rather fresh coloured, with brown hair, slightly streaked with grey, and with arched eyebrows, which gives him a very shrewd appearance. There is a harshness in his voice, but that goes off after he has spoken a sentence or two, and there is such an ease about the man, such a clever adaptation of himself to his audience—you feel so much at home with him, he has so thoroughly the air of one arguing alone and familiarly with yourself—that it is almost impossible, at any rate while he is speaking, not to range yourself on his side. His unaffected good-nature, his natural pleasantry, are irresistible. In the House of Commons he is much the same as on the platform, equally clear, equally unaffected, equally at home. There he stands on the right of the Speaker below the gangway, slightly stooping, as if from physical languor, alternately pointing with the fore-finger of his right hand to some honourable gentleman on the Opposition benches, with whom, if you could only see and not hear, you would suppose he was carrying on a very animated conversation. Occasionally the left hand is brought into play, and by means of sundry taps administered to it by his right, Mr Cobden denotes that he has made some very effectual observations. Mr Cobden does not attempt eloquence—does not quote the classics—is very seldom witty—but gives you the idea of a plain man talking upon business in a business-

like way. You listen to him in vain for the magic play of fancy—for rhetoric "rich with barbaric pearls and gold"—for a philosophy that shall live when speaker and hearer shall have passed away. Charles Fox's test of a speech is eminently applicable to Mr Cobden —"Does it read well? if so it was a bad speech." Mr Cobden satisfies himself with arguing the questions of the present moment with the facts of the present; all his references, all his hits and his speeches, abound with them; all his arguments are gathered from the experience of the day. Occasionally this leads him into error, as when he said he believed a modern newspaper a better mental exercise than a page of Thucydides; but to the men of to-morrow he leaves the task of doing to-morrow's work. Indeed, there are symptoms occasionally discernible, indicating that Mr Cobden is more ready to seek repose—to which no one has a fairer right—than to buckle on the armour for fresh fights.

In one thing he is still, however, as earnest as ever. In the cause of Free Trade, and the vast interest involved in the idea, he neither tires nor faints. For the recent changes in the commercial policy of France —for the pledge it gives us of peace—for the plenty it will give to manufacturing millions on each side the Channel—for all the blessings, social, intellectual, moral, it will scatter the wide world over—let the English nation tender grateful thanks to Richard Cobden.

## IV.

# THE RT. HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

TOWARDS the close of the year 1837, a young man of somewhat singular appearance and gesticulation, broke down in his maiden speech in the House of Commons. Great things had been expected from him. In most circles he had contrived to get talked about —in some to be admired. Years before, with all the confidence of genius and youth, he had told the Irish O'Connell that he would meet him at Philippi, and the hour of that meeting had at length arrived. Already the young *débutant* had become remarkable for the facility with which he had learned to repeat the most contrary doctrines, and to champion interests and prejudices seemingly the most opposed. Marylebone had heard his declaration, that unless the ballot and triennial parliaments were conceded, he could not conceive how the Legislature could ever be in harmony with the people. At High Wycombe he had told the electors that in all financial changes the agri-

cultural interest ought especially to be considered; and at Taunton, he who had appeared at Marylebone as the friend of Joseph Hume became the representative of the Duke of Buckingham and the Carlton Club. At Maidstone, by the defeat of a liberal almost as incomprehensible as himself, he at length succeeded in gaining a seat in St. Stephen's. With pride he took his stand in the presence of the Whig dignitaries of whom he had spoken evil, and of the puzzled country gentlemen, who could not understand how their Toryism was more democratic than the politics of the Whigs, who were wont to drink to civil and religious liberty all over the world, and to toast the people as the only source of legitimate power. Not merely also in the troubled walk of politics, or as the paradoxical commentator on the English constitution, or, as in "Runnymede," the most keen dissector of the *matériel* of the Whig cabinet, was the aspirant for parliamentary laurels known to fame. In the world of fashion and of literature he had already become notorious for the piquancy and satire of his novels. The speaker also was a dandy—there were dandies in 1837—and, therefore, was to be regarded with curiosity. The Conservatives mustered in considerable numbers to back their new man. On the Whig benches there was awe and expectation. Sir Robert Peel cheered the young *débutant* with most stentorian tones. Alas! in vain was the cheer; the *début* was a failure. The exaggerated attitude and diction of the speaker ex-

cited universal ridicule. At length, losing his temper and pausing in the midst of his harangue, Disraeli—for it is he of whom we write—at the top of his voice exclaimed, as he resumed his seat, baffled, beaten, derided, but not despairing, "Though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me." It is not always such predictions are realized. In this case, however, it was no empty boast. The man thus ridiculed and coughed at, thus rejected and despised, was he who lived to hurl at Sir Robert Peel the fiercest philippics known in modern parliamentary annals, and who, by his mere strength of brain, lifted himself up to be the leader of the renowned historic party which had been illustrated by the splendid eloquence of a Bolingbroke and the administrative skill of a Pitt.

Seated on the Opposition benches, half-way down, with some small-brained son of a duke by his side, night after night may be seen the leader of Her Majesty's Opposition. Generally, his eyes are cast down, his hands are crossed in front, and he has all the appearance of a statue. Cold, passionless, he seems of an alien race—a stranger to the hopes, and fears, and interests of a British House of Commons. You wonder how he got there, and how the Tyrrels, and Spooners, and Newdegates, and the rosy-cheeked country gentlemen could have borne banners under such as he. However fierce the debate, or heated the House, or pressing the crisis, there sits Disraeli, occasionally looking at his hands or the clock—other-

wise silent, unmoved, and still. Yet an Indian scout could not keep a more vigilant watch—and immediately an opportunity occurs, he is on his legs, boiling with real or affected indignation. I say real or affected, because Disraeli has so much of the artist about him that you never know whether he is in earnest or not.

As an illustration, let me refer to the debate which ensued on Lord John Russell's diplomatic proceedings at Vienna. It was amusing to see how, at such times, with an elaborate deference all the bitterer for its transparent hollowness, Disraeli would turn to Lord John, and leaning confidentially against the table, pour out against the miserable little man, now looking very angry, all the invective which his folly justified and required. Such a situation can only be shadowed forth by simile. Lord John seemed, as you can imagine, the traveller in the desert overtaken and whirled along by the fierce simoom; or as the hapless voyager caught in his frail bark in the Mediterranean in a white squall, and entombed for ever beneath its unpitying waves; or, if you are not a traveller, and have ever seen him in such a plight, as some poor Cockney, with his Easter Monday garments on, in a heavy storm of rain and hail on Primrose Hill, or Hampstead Heath. Disraeli used no sugared phrases, no mincing terms, no artifice, to veil his contempt; and the noble scion of the House of Bedford was compelled for a couple of hours to sit

through a hell such as only a Dante could describe, or a Fuseli or a Martin paint. You thought of the Indian dancing on the dead body of his prostrate foe; of yourself at a respectable dinner-party, in tight boots and with aching corns, seated between two strong-minded females, with a purple-faced London alderman opposite; of the boa-constrictor drinking the last drop of his victim's blood, and crushing his last bone; of the sufferers of Greek tragedy, with its stern, unrelenting fate;—and you were not sorry when the task was over, and his mauled and mangled foe released.

For savage sarcasm Disraeli stands unrivalled. His self-possession—his intellectual versatility—his clear and cold voice—his plucky appearance, all aid him in a wonderful manner. In his own peculiar line it is dangerous to attempt to cope with him. Roebuck on one occasion did so, and signally failed. Somehow or other, one does not speak of Disraeli as an orator, or as a philosopher—like Burke or Mackintosh—uttering sentences that will form the wisdom of after-ages; or even as a rhetorician, as Macaulay and Sheil. We do not read that he was eloquent, argumentative, pathetic, or patriotic. You speak of him as you would of Tom Sayers. His admirers tell you that he was "in good condition"—that he "showed fight"—that he was "plucky as usual"—that he "hit right and left"—that he was "up to the mark"—and there is a similar isolation and singularity in his parlia-

mentary conduct. Though the leader of a party, he is not its slave; and on occasions he fails even to do the proper thing. Thus at the close of the Crimean war, on the vote of the address on peace—an opportunity which only comes once in a generation—when, according to conventional rules, Disraeli should have made a grand oration, he was actually dumb, and jumped up immediately and left the House after Palmerston's two hours' speech—as if it were one of the silent members who ingloriously sleep on back benches during the very hottest of a parliamentary debate. Historians tell us how Prince Rupert was more than a match for the old-fashioned commanders of the Commonwealth. From his lair at Kinsale—from his lair in the Scilly Isles—from his lair in Jersey, he would pounce upon his enemy, and was irresistible—till a new system was inaugurated, and Blake, a man of greater genius and daring, raised the red cross of the Commonwealth. Lord Derby has been called the Prince Rupert of debate, but the term is more applicable to Disraeli. When you expect him to speak, he has nothing to say; when you do not expect him, he is on his legs; when you think he will go on for another hour, he sits down as rapidly and unexpectedly as he gets up. He delights in surprises, and you cannot tell which is the studied effort and which the impromptu retort. Herein especially is manifest his superiority over the conventional speakers—the Greys and Lord John Russells, who

have got for their Blake a Bernal Osborne. Disraeli is savagely personal. It is his *forte*, and no one in the House can compete with him. Disraeli has the field entirely—too entirely—to himself, and no wonder is it that personality is his favourite weapon, and the one the best appreciated by the young lordlings behind him, who cheer infinitely better than speak. At the same time, it must be confessed that Toryism is always more ungentlemanly and personal than that sublime intellectual abortion, the pure old Whig. The only personal paper attempted in our day was the *Press*, and that soon gave up personalities; the *Satirist* was a Conservative paper; so was the *John Bull;* so was *Blackwood*, when it charged Hazlitt with having pimples on his face; so was the *Anti-Jacobin*, when it called Charles James Fox

"The Catiline of modern times."

If we go back to the days of Swift, L'Estrange, and Mrs Manley, we shall find the same personality characteristic of the High Church and Tory party. Dr Arnold, somewhere in his letters, makes a similar remark.

It is wonderful — the power of oratory. The speaker, whether from the platform or the pulpit, is the only worker who gets his reward at once. You may invent what shall enrich a nation, and die a beggar; you may write, but your hair will be grey before the world is familiar with your name; you may

be a poet, and fame may not own your genius till the turf on your grave is green; but, possess the magic power with the living voice to reach the living heart of multitudes, and immediately you are a king amongst men. Not merely amongst a rude, untutored peasantry, or inflammable youth, or a middle-class public particularly prone to clap-trap, or an Exeter-Hall audience, rather feminine than select; but amongst educated gentlemen and polished scholars, amongst men who have long mastered emotion, and to whom most oratory is as "sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal." On a grand field night you find this as you see Disraeli, perfectly aware that victory is beyond his grasp, standing on the floor of the House, his eyes flashing defiance, his lip curled with sarcasm, his arm pointed to the object of attack, and his voice alternately expressing indignation and contempt. As I have already hinted, as an orator Disraeli stands by himself. It is not English —that elaborately-dressed form; that pale Hebrew face, shaded with curling hair, still luxuriant and dark; that style, so melo-dramatic, yet so effective; that power of individuality which makes you hate the object of his hate; that passion which you scarce know whether to call malignant or sublime. When he rises, it is needless for the speaker to announce his name. A glance at the orator, with his glistening vest, tells you that the great advocate of the pure Semitic race is on his legs. You have seen that face

in *Punch*. You have imagined Coningsby just as attentively listened to, or Vivian Grey looking just as cool. It is not every man that can play a losing game. To speak from the Treasury benches with a whipper-in to make a house and secure you a cordial welcome, to feel that a triumphant speech will be succeeded by a triumphant vote, are privileges granted but to few—to Disraeli seldom indeed. So far as the Opposition are concerned, the debate generally languishes till the speaker announces the name of the member for Buckinghamshire. Immediately you lean forward. In his face there is a dazzling, saucy look which at once excites your interest. You see that if not a great man, he is an intensely clever one, and though on reflection you see more display than reality in his performance, and are not sure that he is in earnest, or that he means what he says, or that he is sustained and prompted by any great principle, you feel that as an orator he has few rivals. When he soars, as he occasionally does, you tremble lest he should break down; but Disraeli never attempts more than he can achieve, and when nearest to pathos he saves himself by a happy flight; but even in his highest efforts he preserves the same doggedly-cool and unconcerned appearance, and will stop to suck an orange, or actually, as he did in his great budget speech, to cut his nails. It is true there are times when he looks more emotional. On that memorable November morning, when he was ousted

from his chancellorship, when his party were ingloriously driven from the Eden in which they had hoped long

> "To live and lie reclined
> On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind,"—

back into the bleak and desert world, the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer came out of the House at half-past five a.m., gay and fresh as if the majority had been with him, not against him. There was an unwonted buoyancy in his walk and sparkle in his eye; but the excitement of the contest was hardly over—the swell of the storm was there still—still rang in his eyes the thunders of applause, audible in the lobby, which greeted his daring retorts and audacious personalities. Even when as occasionally he leads his party into a *cul de sac*, and listens to their murmurs and hears their threats, you cannot perceive any feeling of disappointment or regret on his impassive face. No stone could display more indifference.

But Disraeli, I am told, has no principles. Well, what eminent M.P. has? In the House of Commons men deal not with principles, but with facts. The best statesman in modern times is he who is least hampered by principles, and is free to follow the leading of public opinion. All legislation is temporary, and if we try at anything more enduring we generally err. It may be a grave fault in Disraeli—granting, for the sake of argument, that the charge be true—but, if other statesmen are equally remiss in

this matter of principle, why is Disraeli alone to be singled out for censure? Has Lord Palmerston been so consistent that the British public are to fire with indignation at the licentiousness of Disraeli's political career? Lord John Russell's earlier speeches were against reform. The great Whig idol entered the House of Commons under Tory auspices. We have built up statues in every corner of the land to Sir Robert Peel, yet what principle did that eminent statesman start with which he did not abdicate in the course of his eventful parliamentary existence? Genius has a creed of its own—forms of expression of its own, and if it condescends to party Shibboleths, it gives them a wider bearing. If this be true everywhere, especially is this true in practical politics, where, at all times,

"Black 's not so very black, nor white so very white;"

and where, in these times, the differences between the occupants of the Treasury benches and those of the Opposition are so few. There is a wide interval between a Hobbes and a Milton—between a Filmer and a Locke—between a Blackstone and a Bentham—between the stump orator of the Temple Forum, or the Codger's Hall, declaiming on the rights of man, and the leader of the House of Commons dealing with a thousand discordant rights, the growth of the conflicting passions, and principles, and interests, and prejudices of a thousand years; but between the Whig and Tory aristocracy at this time—between

Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston—the line of separation is so obscure that the wonder is that a respectable line can be held up to the public at all. Mr Stafford jobbed at the Admiralty, but were Mr Gladstone's nominees immaculate? Disraeli believes he and his party are as honest as their opponents. The Whig and Peelite writers are astonished, and one of the dullest of them, in a feeble octavo containing 700 pages ("Disraeli; a biography"), enters his protest, and begs to "recall our attention to the principles of English morality, which have done even more than the industrious energy and practical genius of the people in making England what she is. England has been a standing witness against political atheism." Well, if with Disraeli we laugh at the Whig aristocracy, who have always been narrow in their principles, and narrow in their application, who snubbed Burke, ignored Sheridan, only accepted Mackintosh when he gave up the doctrines of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, and would have made Canning whipper-in—who deluded the nation with a Reform Bill which was to have prolonged their political existence *in secula seculorum*, and did not even carry Free Trade—if this be political atheism, it has become a necessity and a fact. The truth is, position has a great deal to do with politics. The Whigs found out this when they carried the celebrated Appropriation Clause. If Lord Palmerston had been in office he would never have defeated Lord John

Russell and caused the latter to resign on the question of general or local militia. Out of office no man has declaimed so energetically against the Income Tax as Mr Gladstone. In office Mr Horsman was a Whig. With the sweets of office dangling before them, as we get jackasses to move on by flourishing a bit of hay, what lofty patriots (*risum teneatis*) do middle-aged barristers become. On one side of the Speaker's chair there are men especially bound to find fault with what is professed on the other. Of course they do this unsparingly and *con amore*, because they know that if the tables were turned their own acts would be subjected to a similar unsparing criticism. The country reaps the benefit, for the progress thus consummated is slow — slow as public opinion. Amongst us

> "Freedom broadens slowly down
> From precedent to precedent;"

but to argue that on one side of the Speaker's chair are the sheep and on the other the goats—on one side the knaves and on the other the honest men—that, for instance, a barrister speaking on the Whig side is a patriot of the first water, and a barrister speaking on the Opposition benches a dishonest partisan—to believe, for instance, that a manufacturer with his hands red with the blood of factory children (see the evidence submitted to the House when Mr Crook gained his recent victory) is an enlightened philanthropist, and that a country gentleman, with his

horror of democracy and change, is a selfish ignoramus, betrays a verdancy rare in well-informed circles. It is not that Mr Disraeli sits on the side of the House that is unpopular, and must be unpopular, that he is to be censured. In office he was civil, and that is more than can be said of every leader of the House of Commons. Partisan hacks may cast no stone at him. A more august tribunal there may be even than of the House of Commons. For a man not born to rank to be on an equality with men of rank, nay more, to be their leader, is a triumph, but there are grander triumphs still; if Mr Disraeli has missed them, there are few that have found them, and those few rarely have a chance of catching Mr Speaker's eye.

## V.

## THE RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

MANY, many years ago, England's foremost statesman —distrusted by the multitude—feared by his colleagues for his superiority—wearied of the strife and turmoil of party—on the eve of his departure as Governor-General of India, spent a short while at Seaforth House, bidding farewell to his Liverpool constituents. His custom was, we are told, to sit in his room, for hours, gazing on the wide expanse of ocean before him; while below, a little lad played at his feet in the sand. The old Puritan tells us "Man proposes, God disposes." Canning did not go to India—stopped at home to let all Europe understand that England had done with the holy alliance; stopped at home, in a few short years to be buried in Westminster Abbey, while a nation wept—and the little lad grew, till his name became familiar in our mouths as a household word. Does it not seem as if the young Gladstone, while playing on the sand with

England's great statesman, looking far on the wide sea before him, had caught some of the genius—some of the individuality—some of the eloquence—some of the statesmanship, which has given to the name of Canning an immortality which shall be fresh and fragrant when the grave in Westminster Abbey and the statue in Palace-yard shall have crumbled into dust? Let me not be understood to place Gladstone on an equal pedestal with Canning; to do so were ridiculous. The genius of Canning was of the highest order; like that of all great men, it was universal in its range—it embraced the opposite poles of human thought and action. With the keen arrow of his wit he could deal as deadly blow as could others with the most vehement invective or laboured harangue. Gladstone is here wofully deficient. He neither jests, nor laughs, nor smiles, and evidently avoids, as unfair, little tricks and artifices which less scrupulous or more skilful orators would be but too happy to employ. It must also be remembered that oratorical display is less sought in the House of Commons than formerly. Year by year it is becoming more a business assembly—more and more a monster vestry meeting, and less and less a gathering of "*patres conscripti.*" The oratorical era of the House of Commons reached its climax with Canning; the House now meets for the "despatch of business," and the men who succeed now-a-days are men whose faculty of business is something wonderful, and Mr Gladstone is no exception to this rule.

In the first reformed Parliament, as if to show the fallacy of the melancholy forebodings of the anti-reformers, to the effect that for the future all talent would avoid St Stephen's, Mr Gladstone, then a very young man, of ample promise, from whom much was expected by his friends and collegiate contemporaries, became member for the Duke of Newcastle's close borough of Newark. His initiation into office, under Sir Robert Peel, took place soon after. When Sir Robert was prematurely borne off the political arena by a lamentable accident, Mr Gladstone became known to the world as a faithful Peelite, intent upon the vindication of his master's fame, and consistent in the application of his principles. It also became clear that he is somewhat more than the blind follower of a great leader. He had given proofs of unusual tenderness of conscience, of marvellous subtilty of intellect, of rare independence of spirit—for he had resigned office, though on what ground was never exactly clear, and had written upon High Church claims, on principles exclusively his own. No mention is made of Mr Gladstone in the "Orators of the Age," a book published in 1847. In 1838 Mr James Grant could write, and reviewers could praise, the book in which such want of political sagacity occurs as follows:—"I have no idea that he will ever acquire the reputation of a great statesman." It is not very long since the above was written; and now, on all sides, it is admitted Mr Gladstone is the ablest man in the House

of Commons. It was he alone who overthrew Disraeli as he had just acquired the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and the leadership of the House of Commons, and was the mainstay of the Coalition Cabinet. In the natural course of events Mr Gladstone must soon be premier. If he does not acquire the reputation of a great statesman, it is clear no man in our age will. I fancy Mr Disraeli has no love for the orator who triumphed over him with ease, and with a proud consciousness of rectitude more potent even than eloquence itself. Out-of-doors Mr Gladstone has yet to win that hearty popularity which is the lot for a short while of the man whom the people delighteth to honour, but it is not in the House of Commons and amongst his peers that his accession to power would be viewed with regret.

Sidney Smith's description of Horner I have always considered peculiarly appropriate to Gladstone—"There was something very remarkable in his countenance. The commandments were written in his face, and I have often told him there was not a crime he might not commit with impunity, as no judge nor jury who saw him would give the smallest degree of credit to any evidence against him. There was in his look a calm, settled love of all that was honourable and good—an air of wisdom and sweetness. You saw at once that he was a great man, whom Nature had intended for a leader of human beings. You ranged yourself willingly under his banner, and submitted to his

sway." I copy the passage, as very applicable to the subject of this article. Judge for yourself. Come with me into the Strangers' gallery of the House of Commons. It is early yet; the hour appointed for the transaction of private business is not over; but already down at the Treasury Bench there is the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with papers all around, to the study of which he devotes apparently considerable attention. All of a sudden you see him drop his papers and look earnestly at some speaker who has risen to ask him some unimportant question. Mr Gladstone rises, takes off his hat, and advances to the table. With his plain dress and his fluent delivery you might almost take him for a clergyman. He repeats the question, answers it in language of remarkable elegance, and sits down without making the slightest effort at display. Look at him now, with full dark eyes, clear intellectual head, and a body well proportioned, and of an average size. Nowhere can you see a face more indicative of goodness, and honesty, and power. Of the latter, if you wait, you will soon cease to doubt. A motion is before the House. Mr Gladstone rises to defend the government; and however forcible may have been the attack, equally forcible is the defence. He is a master of debate, and you are not sorry when he rises to reply. His acuteness never fails him. His voice is always good, his delivery always animated, and his language never at fault. If you were to print his speech from the reporters' short-hand notes, without any revision what-

ever, it would be a perfect piece of composition. On one occasion, the celebrated Dick Martin complained that the reporters had not done him justice. It was urged that they had but given the hon. gentleman's exact words. "True," he said, "but did I spake them in italics?" Mr Gladstone never need fear the reporters giving his exact words, even with the accompanying italics. Better than any man in the House he can stand the test of ridicule. Indeed, with his serious demeanour he abashes levity, and puts aside all trifling. He would act the part of one of the Roman senators to perfection. If he cannot win a victory by fair means, he will not by foul. When the House, as it is too apt to do, forgets itself—when it abounds with sarcasm and personalities, Mr Gladstone sits silent and sorrowful. But I have not yet given you an idea of his power. The party debate over, the House goes into committee. It is late; the House is hot; members are weary and away; but one man is at his post, and that man is Mr Gladstone. Not a criticism is uttered but he makes a note of it. With his knees crossed so as to serve him for a table, with a pencil in his hand, with his head bent forward in the direction of the speaker, there he sits hour after hour, save when he rises to defend, or enforce, or explain the measure of which he has the charge. I believe he may make a dozen speeches in the course of a single night on different subjects, and so silvery is his voice, so ready his language, so acute, and searching, and comprehensive his criticism, that, the more you hear of

him, the more you are impressed with admiration. In his intellect, strength and flexibility are combined, and thus it is he is so full and elastic, and effective when on his legs. The more difficult the theme, the more animated the debate, the more solemn the crisis, the more does he shine. Some of his more serious efforts are worthy of the best days of parliamentary history. When some national unrighteousness has been done, when some folly of the hour has to be pointed out and deplored, you know then that Gladstone, with "dauntless words and high," will speak as did he

> "Who shook the sere leaves from the wood
> As if a storm pass'd by."

Perhaps his greatest triumphs have been his last. No one but Mr Gladstone could have reconciled the House of Commons not merely to the continuance, but to the increasing the Income Tax, at the very time the public had been led to expect its abolition altogether. Mr Gladstone's sore-throat, which necessitated delay, was a European difficulty. Happily nature and Dr Ferguson proved victorious, and the Palmerston cabinet was saved. The Chancellor's speech of four hours was a master-piece of tact and ingenuity; was persuasive and eloquent, and overpowering; the reply to Mr Disraeli was complete, and for once in his life Mr Gladstone was almost savage. "I could not stand that speech of Gladstone's," said a Conservative M.P. to a friend; "I was compelled to vote for him." In the debate on Mr

Du Cane's amendment as if conscious of his coming majority of 116, Mr Gladstone assumed a haughty and dashing bearing, and displayed a disposition to punish his adversaries, which he seldom evinces. His budget took the world by surprise; it was, as an M.P. described it, an ambitious budget. The Opposition made but a feeble fight; Mr Disraeli was but faintly supported by his own party. For a wonder, after he had spoken about a quarter of an hour, members flocked into the lobby, and chatted away with their hands in their pockets, as if Mr Spooner were delivering an oration against Maynooth, or as if a Marylebone M.P. were ingloriously riding some dull hobby to death. Sir John Pakington made a blunder still worse. His advice to the aggrieved hop-growers to rally with the publicans and sinners—with all the interests damaged, or expecting to be damaged, by the budget, rendered their cause hopeless. When the question lay, as the hon. baronet seemed to imply, between the public good on one side and particular interests on the other, there could be no doubt as to the result. Theoretically the House of Commons may be an imperfect body, but more or less it represents public opinion, and no one appeals to its public spirit in vain.

Mr Gladstone's position is by no means a pleasant one. Mr Fox said he would rather get his bread any way than by being Chancellor of the Exchequer. Depend upon it Mr Gladstone would say the same. As a man of peace, he has been compelled to find the

money for the Chinese war—a war against which he has more than once raised an indignant protest; he has had to swallow his objections to an income tax, and increase it; he has had to put up with a "gigantic innovation," and pocket the one-and-a-half millions of money the Lords persisted in pressing on him by refusing to repeal the paper duty. He has had, besides, to come to parliament for money for fortifications. No wonder he is indignant,—no wonder he charges the House of Commons and the people of his country with extravagance,—no wonder he exclaimed as he did in one of his speeches towards the end of the late session:—"Vacillation, uncertainty, costliness, extravagance, meanness, and all the conflicting vices that could be enumerated, are united in our present system. There is a total want of authority to direct and guide. When anything is to be done we have to go from department to department, from the Executive to the House of Commons, from the House of Commons to a Committee, from a Committee to a Commission, and from a Commission back to a Committee, so that years pass away, the public is disappointed, and the money of the country is wasted. I believe such are the evils of the system that nothing short of revolutionary reform will ever be sufficient to rectify it."

Mr Gladstone, it must be admitted, has his faults. In the first place, he has the logical faculty in excess, and will keep on splitting hairs till you are exhausted;

and, secondly, when out of office, and freed from its responsibilities, he will persist in putting before the House the unpopular side of the question. Again, he is of an enthusiastic character, and will paint a picture *couleur de rose* when the facts have a decided tendency the other way. He is very often the slave of an idea; he contemplates it till he loses all perception of anything else. Hence is it he has not a stronger position out of doors. Out of office this habit increases, till it is sometimes actually offensive. Whatever may be the subject of debate, he is sure to lengthen it and encumber it. He ignores the popular view. It must be refined, and sublimated, and in perilous mazes lost, and then Mr Gladstone is in his glory. In office he is a very different and much safer man; and the Premier may sleep secure as long as Mr Gladstone is at his post. Yet in office he will do strange things. He resigned rather than vote for an inquiry into the causes of the fearful calamities and horrors of the Crimean campaign. As the representative of the body that is least permeated with the popular feeling in England—the Oxford University—Mr Gladstone seems compelled to act in this way. On the Russian war—on the Divorce Bill—on the Church Rate Bill—he thus voted on the unpopular side. Yet you feel that St Stephen's does not contain an honester man, that

"Neither gold,
Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly bliss,"

could lead him to deviate a hair's breadth from what he conceived to be the right. Nay, more—occasionally he will boil over with enthusiasm, as when, in his Letters to Lord Aberdeen, on the sufferings of the Neapolitan state prisoner, he made

"All Europe ring from side to side."

His mission to the Ionian Islands—unfortunate as it turned out to be in every respect—was undertaken in a similar fit of enthusiasm. Indeed, he has so much of this precious quality that it cannot all find a vent in public life. Hence a work on Homer, too bulky even for men of ample leisure and scholarship to find time to read.

Remember that Mr Gladstone entered the House of Commons as the nominee of the late Duke of Newcastle—the Duke who asked if he might not do as he liked with his own?—admit that he is no party man—that he is very conscientious—that he is very anxious to learn, and the conclusion is that he admits now much that he opposed in earlier life. When he entered public life he was deeply attached to the great retrogressive party in Church and State; but he found much that had been clear in an Oxford atmosphere was quite the reverse in St Stephen's. How strenuous, for instance, was his opposition to the Emancipation Act. Let it also be said that he was originally a protectionist—that he is now a free-trader—that he has given up as impracticable the doctrines he enunciated in his "State in its Relation to the

Church." Strange is it now that England—low-church and dissenting—should have for her chief man a believer in Apostolical Succession. Yet Mr Gladstone defends this doctrine, and, on account of it, is a firm believer in the Church of England. Chillingworth said, "I am fully persuaded there hath been no such succession." Bishop Stillingfleet declares, "This succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself." Bishop Hoadly asserts, "It hath not pleased God, in his providence, to keep up any proof of the least probability or moral possibility of a regal and uninterrupted succession, but there is a great appearance, and, humanly speaking, a certainty to the contrary, that the succession had often been interrupted." Archbishop Whately says, "There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with approach to certainty, his spiritual pedigree." Mr Gladstone's faith in this respect, it may be, redeems his errors of progress in Oxford eyes. Oxford may well be proud of the child of her training. Mr Gladstone, in 1831, closed a brilliant career at Christ Church by taking a double first.

It was a bright idea of Lord Palmerston, getting Mr Gladstone to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. Out of office his mind would have burst all bonds of habit and wandered far away. He would have opposed the budget, and the ministry would have been defeated.

It is his charity, which hopeth all things, which has led Mr Gladstone into more than foolish acts. On

several occasions he damaged himself by his official appointments. In this world it is not always the good men who get on the best. Sometimes the rogues are more than a match for them. Now, Mr Gladstone is one of the good men; and when he was a little boy no doubt he wrote in his copy-book that "Honesty is the best policy," and in his charity, he is too apt to think that other men, when they were little boys, did the same. Hence, as he gives them credit for learning this motto when young, and not forgetting it when they were old, he is occasionally imposed on by more worldly men. I believe Mr Gladstone would join with the man who, after praying for all things under the earth, or in it, or above it, finished by praying for the poor devil himself.

Mr Gladstone is one of the few men in the House who rise to eloquence of the stateliest order. He is seldom, if ever, historical and lost in precedent. He seems simply to rely upon his knowledge of the subject, and his ability to place it before the House in a commanding and attractive manner. How great is his merit we can best learn by contrast. When Gladstone brought forward his first budget, the House expected a treat; the pressure was enormous; strangers had taken their places, waiting for the opening of the gallery, as early as noon, and though the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke nearly five hours, though his speech had to do exclusively with those generally dry things, facts and figures, the House was crowded to

the last, and not a stranger left the gallery. When Sir Cornewall Lewis, a good man but a poor speaker —a speaker, however, who has amazingly improved of late—opened his budget, the very reverse was the case. I believe there were ten strangers in the Speaker's gallery; I believe there were not more than a hundred members in the House. Yet the occasion was an eventful one. Peace had just been proclaimed, but the extra expenditure of the war had not ceased, and had Mr Gladstone been the Chancellor, the attention of the country and the House would have been excited. As it was, a humdrum speaker performed his duties in a humdrum manner, and not even money matters aroused a dumb House into eloquence and life. On the introduction of his last and memorable budget, the desire to hear Mr Gladstone was amazing. Strangers, with members' orders, took their places as early as nine a.m., and, for the first time since he had left it, Lord Brougham occupied a seat in the House of Commons.

## VI.

# JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.

Some few years back, while the Anti-Corn-Law agitation was yet in its infancy, and being fought with a fierceness almost incredible in these dilettanti days, when in agricultural circles no language was considered too contemptuous for its supporters, in a small village in one of the midland counties an unknown individual was delivering an address on the all-absorbing theme. He was dressed in black, and his coat was of that peculiar cut considered by the worthy disciples of George Fox—alas! how falsely—as a standing protest against the fashions of the world. The lecturer was young, square built, and muscular, with a broad face and forehead, with a fresh complexion, with "mild blue eyes," like those of the late Russian Nicholas, but, nevertheless, with a general expression quite sufficiently decided and severe. As an orator the man did not shine. His voice was good, though somewhat harsh; his manner was awkward, as is the custom of

the country, and the sentences came out of his mouth loose, naked, and ill-formed. He was not master of the situation, yet he wanted not confidence, nor matter, nor words. Practice it was clear was all that he required. The orator felt this himself. He told his audience that he was learning to speak upon the question, and that he would succeed in time. That he did learn, that he did succeed, is obvious when I mention the fact that the speaker was no other than John Bright, M.P. for Birmingham.

It is one of the effects of a popular agitation that it elevates for a time into equal importance the true man and the false. Both alike are strong in the exposure of practical anomalies or injustice—strong in the power of uttering for the dumb multitude what it travails in agony to declare—strong in the sweet voices of the sovran mob. The hour makes the man. In its tumult, and excitement, and uproar, like the spectres on the Brocken, he seems twice his ordinary size. Poor, pitiful, small, weak-minded creature though he be, for a time he wields a giant's power, and speaks with a giant's voice. For a time of each tribune of the people it is emphatically declared—

> "In him Demosthenes is heard again,
> Liberty taught him her Athenian strain."

The Sacheverells, the Lord George Gordons, the Wilkses, the orator Hunts, the Feargus O'Connors and Daniel O'Connells, have each seemed to the people,

delirious with the intoxication of the time, what Stephano seemed to Caliban, a very god. The hour past, the tumult calmed, the angry voices stilled, men's eyes opened, the dilated demagogue dwindles into its ordinary insignificance. Alas! poor Yorick, where be his jibes and gibberings? It is a painful process this state of collapse. To have been floated into public life on a public agitation, and to continue to float when that agitation has ceased, when the political world is dull as the weeds that rot on Lethe's shore; to play Othello when Othello's occupation is gone, requires an unusually strong brain and brave heart. Mr Bright has gone through all this and succeeded; nay, more, has triumphed, and by this triumph has placed himself foremost among the statesmen of the age.

I scarce believe, with Robert Owen and the moderns, that all men are equal, and that the only difference between a great man and a little man is that one is born on a pedestal and that the other is not. Still it is a great advantage to be born on a pedestal. With an infatuation unparalleled amongst savages and incredible in a people who profess to believe the Bible, we have so crippled the democracy, that when it enters into the arena with aristocracy it does so at tremendous odds. To attain his position John Bright has injured his health and shortened his days. Men like Lord John Russell and Viscount Palmerston attain a superior position by just sufficient healthy labour to lengthen theirs. They are born on the pedestal, and not placed there by

merits of their own. Few of our noble statesmen would have been there unless born there. Either the energy, or the time, or the patience, or the talent to secure a position would have been wanting. To emerge from the mob, to rise from the respectable dead level of the Smiths, Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons, to get the advantage over them by the head and shoulders, is a Herculean task. In the first place, the men who are on the pedestal look on contemptuously if you try to put yourself on an equality with them. In the second place, the Smiths, Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons will do all that they can to prevent your achieving a higher position than themselves. The very class for whom you labour will deem you impertinent, and damn you with faint praise. Only a remarkable man could thus shake off all obstacles and climb the steep

"Where Fame's proud temple shines afar."

Whatever may be the feeling out of doors, it will not be denied that John Bright has succeeded in doing this in the House of Commons and amongst his peers. No one ever heard him in Parliament without feeling that he is a power in that House; yet such a position was one no one would have prophesied for him a few years since. Everything was against him when he was first returned as member for Durham. All his antecedents were precisely those most calculated to excite opposition and contempt. He was not merely not a landlord, but he was a cotton lord. He was not merely not of the

Church of England, but of the church whose harmless peculiarities have been more laughed at than its virtues admired. He was not merely one of the Anti-Corn-Law League, but one of its greatest men. He was not merely at the head of an agitation thoroughly revolutionary, as it seemed to its opponents, but he was one of those who let it be clearly understood that that agitation, so far from being final, was but the means to an end. He not only had no respect for Parliamentary shams and conventionalities, but he expressed that contempt in a manner the most unpalatable and undisguised. Nevertheless it was not long ere he compelled the House to do homage to his honesty and strength. At first it rebelled—it groaned when he got up—it emptied itself when he spoke; but the House, if it looks kindly on aristocratic imbecility, will not long refuse to sanction democratic capacity and pluck. The House is generous, and has a thorough appreciation of a MAN; and the result is, that now, as far as it is concerned, Mr Bright has nothing to fear. He may damage himself out of doors; he may offend a people warlike in its instinct in spite of cotton-growing Manchester; he may alienate the cultivated mind of the country by his grovelling theory of a nation's life; he may arouse, and justly, the hostility of the press, by the degrading mission which he would chalk out for it. He may make people very angry by his praise of the Emperor Napoleon and his readiness to sacrifice

Savoy. But he has taken honours in the senate, and there his position is secure.

How is this? In London, generally, Mr Bright is not a popular man. In what is considered good society it is hinted that he is a demagogue, and that his dangerous mission is to set the lower classes against the upper ones. People tell you that on the platform Mr Bright is a very different and much bolder man than on the floor of St Stephen's—a criticism which, however, may be passed on every public man, inasmuch as platform speaking aims at creating popular enthusiasm, while oratory in the House of Commons is of a more business-like and practical character. It is undeniable, however, that just at this juncture the opinions of Mr Bright are those of a minority. His peace views are decidedly at a discount. His devotion to the material interests of the nation is carried to an extreme, and is somewhat repulsive to those who believe that man does not live by bread alone. His pugnacity, reminding one of the celebrated remark of the late Lord George Bentinck, that if he were not a Quaker he would be a prize-fighter, has been an offence to the many who are prone to sing:—

> "Let us alone; what pleasure can we have
> To war with evil? Is there any peace
> In ever climbing up the climbing wave?"

To all such,—to all who believe in the traditions of

the past,—to all who would rather endure a wrong than fight with it,—to all who would take the world as they find it, and only smile when told that their idols are wind-bags which would collapse only with the prick of a pin,—Mr Bright is a constant source of uneasiness and irritation. Now, in London especially, these classes are numerous. London people are well-to-do; they soon make money; they soon rise to the dignity of a brougham and a country-house; they soon learn to give good dinners and to eat them. And men in this position, when they have done their day's business in the city, only desire ease and rest out of business hours. In the provinces it is different; there, Paterfamilias, as soon as he puts up his shutters, or locks up his warehouse, is sure to have some philanthropic, or religious, or political employment; a London political lecturer is coming, and he must take the chair; or a Ragged School is to be formed, and he is to be the Treasurer; or a Mechanics' Institution is in difficulties, and he has to show how the requisite funds are to be obtained. These are the men who rally round John Bright; but they are scarce in London, and yet John Bright, their representative, is honoured in the House of Commons. Why? The answer is soon given. Come with me into the Strangers' Gallery, and look hard on your left. About the middle of the third bench of the gangway you see a vigorous-looking man in black. What a contrast he presents to the mass around! Lord Bacon deemed himself ancient when he

was thirty-one. Mr Bright is, then, more than ancient, but he is in the prime of life nevertheless. The debate has been drawing its slow length along, and weariness is on every face. Small men have been on their legs. The Bœotians—the Newdegates and Spooners, and others—have been uttering sentiments childish and common-place; or an official underling, with languid oratory, and much allusion to blue-books, has essayed to show that everything governmental is as it ought to be, that the right man is in the right place, and that everything is for the best; or my Lord Palmerston, with his usual nonchalant air, has contended that no great harm has been done, and that if there had it did not matter much. Up rises Mr Bright, with a voice something of a scream, and rushes into the very heart of the subject—scornfully tossing on one side, as irrelevant, the platitudes of preceding speakers. The question, whatever it may be, is taken up manfully and boldly. There is no display of fine learning—no Latin quotation—no subtle disquisition—no elaborated climax—no polished peroration. There is no attempt to evade the difficulties of the question; on the contrary, the speaker seems to delight in them, as an Irishman will fight for fun. He states them in all their naked literalness, and wrestles with them as an intellectual athlete. I do not say Mr Bright is always in the right; I believe he is often in the wrong, and none can scorn more than I the Manchester policy as regards peace and war—a policy which, as Mr Dis-

raeli truly remarked, would degrade our ancient monarchy into a third-rate republic—a policy repugnant to the national pride and sense of honour—a policy oblivious of glorious traditions and ancient fame. But Mr Bright is in earnest—he means what he says; you see that the speaker has heart as well as brain, and on he goes right to the mark, uttering honestly and plainly his thoughts, calling a spade a spade, however contrary that may be to parliamentary etiquette and usage. There are times when he attempts a loftier strain, when he becomes even eloquent, and appeals to the consciences of men of all parties, and carries with him the hearts of all. At such times Mr Bright's earnestness is overpowering. You cannot resist its impetuous course, and the House, that feels rightly, if it votes wrongly, is completely subdued. On more than one occasion, when Mr Bright has risen to speak, has there been

> "Silence, deep as death,
> And the boldest held his breath
> For a time."

This was especially apparent a session or two back, during the Indian debates. I never heard more effective speeches delivered by any man, and I think the general opinion coincided with my own. Mr Bright was well up in his subject. India can produce cotton. Manchester needs cotton. Hence it was Mr Bright spoke with such vehemence, and passion, and power. How great the contrast between a modern

House of Commons and an ancient one—between Bright and Burke! It was an ancient dynasty overthrown; an ancient people oppressed; a multitude numerous as the sands upon the sea-shore, wasting away beneath British injustice; another Verres harassing an imperial Sicily, that excited the imagination and fired the heart of Mr Burke. It was because a splendid opportunity of growing cotton for Manchester was lost, that Mr Bright bore down upon the government with resistless force. The stand-point of the one was chivalrous and classic, of the other modern and commercial. Sneer at it as selfish if you will, but is it not the truer one of the two? All men act from selfish motives,—the Christian who flies from the wrath to come, as much as the spendthrift who squanders, or the miser who saves. As I write, I read in the *Times* the report of a sermon preached at the consecration of Tiptree Heath Church, by no less a distinguished divine than Dr Croly. The Doctor's aim was to show that if a nation feared the Lord it would prosper, and hence the propriety of the nation supporting a religious establishment. Give your money to the Almighty because He will pay it you back with interest. Such is the modern gospel. If it be true that we can only attain to an enlightened selfishness at the best; and if it be true, as Mr Bright believes, that the Manchester policy as regards India would bring with it an immense amount of good; it, at any rate, must not be despised for its selfishness, and surely, at any rate, may chal-

lenge a comparison with the Derby policy, or the Palmerston policy, or that of the Whigs. As regards India, it is clear that, had the Bright policy prevailed, we should have had no Indian mutiny.

"Mr Bright," says Mr G. R. Francis, in his careful estimate of the orators of the age, "may be said to have been dragged upwards by Mr Cobden in his rapid and remarkable ascent to fame and notoriety. Had he been left to pursue his path alone it is more than probable that he would never have emerged from the dead level of society, or that if he had attained any eminence at all, it would have been to achieve a distinction not more illustrious than that of the most noisy and arrogant orator of a parish vestry, in whom strength of lungs and an indomitable determination not to be outbullied, are the most prominent qualifications." How foolish all this seems, read by the light of the present; but when Mr Francis wrote, such was the general feeling. And now, like another Warwick, Mr Bright stands,—a setter up or puller down of kings. When Lord Derby is in office the Whigs are indignant, and declare that he has formed an unnatural alliance with Mr Bright. When he supports Lord John Russell, the Conservatives hint at another Lichfield compact. Independent Radicals, men whose self-love suggests leadership, intimate that they differ strongly from the member for Birmingham. Yet I am much mistaken if that honourable gentleman do not act a conspicuous part in the House for many years to come. As old statesmen pass away—

as old prejudices are forgotten—as Mr Bright himself mellows with years—as his views form with growing experience, leadership and office must fall to his lot. Even by this time is his great heresy, during the Crimean War, forgotten if not forgiven. Wise men now fail to perceive that for the anxiety then endured—for the treasure then wasted—for the blood then spilt as water—for the heroism then displayed—for the national enthusiasm then created, we have received an adequate result.

The return of Mr Bright for Birmingham after Manchester had rejected him, indicates a certain amount of virtue. It indicates Reform and Peace. It says to a man like Lord John Russell, standing trembling at the work of his own hands, "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?" and it bids our most warlike remember that England by interest, by policy, by ten thousand considerations more or less pressing, is bound to keep the peace with all the world.

The *Times* is occasionally very angry with Mr Bright, yet he has never said harder things of the aristocracy and the British Constitution than the *Times*. If you turn to the *Saturday Review*, you learn there is not a man in office who is not a fool. Hear our officers in the army and navy. According to them our rulers are blind, and the country is going headlong to the devil. It was only the other day that a military man assured us that the most conservative of officers were

fast becoming radicals in consequence of their disgust at the waste and mismanagement in high quarters. If Mr Bright's object be a good one, let him have the same licence allowed to others. Public agitation requires enthusiasm, and exaggeration is the necessary result. All members of parliament on the platform speak in a different manner to what they do in the House, and this is still more the case with the Radical Reformer, since on the platform he publishes his extreme views, but in the House of Commons, where there is a majority against him, he is compelled to take what he can get. If Reform is required,—if a further extension of the suffrage be a duty,—if it be true that in the counties the tenant farmers are under the influence of their landlords; or as Lord Derby, when Lord Stanley, said, you can always tell the politics of the representative of a county if you know the politics of the leading landlords,—if our borough constituencies be what they are, at Wakefield, and Gloucester, and elsewhere, he who would endeavour to wipe away from us this reproach and shame, and suggests reform, is acting a patriot's part; and the men who stand by the present system, who shut their eyes to its defects, who cry "esto perpetua," are the real fomenters of class disunion and revolution. Can any one doubt that the majority of men, whether in the House of Commons or elsewhere, act from interested motives? If so, why should Mr Bright be sent to Coventry for saying so? Mr Bright is as interested as others, but

he represents a class who have been denied their rightful position in politics, to whom it is of actual consequence that taxation be lightened and commerce freed—a class to whom Great Britain must look more and more to find employment and sustenance for her swarming sons. The charge of self-interest comes with an ill grace from lawyers, who move heaven and earth to prevent law-reform, or from landlords, who sing with might and main,

> "Let learning, laws, and commerce die,
> But give us back our old nobility."

The perpetual abuse of Mr Bright in some quarters is ungenerous. Men who are dumb in his presence are ready enough to bark behind his back. However, from a hostile press and hostile orators, Mr Bright, if he be wise, will learn somewhat. "Caius Gracchus," writes old Plutarch, "was rough and impetuous, and it often happened that in his harangues he was carried away by passion, contrary to his judgment, and his voice became shrill, and he fell to abuse, and grew confused in his discourse. To remedy this fault he employed Licinius, a well-educated slave, who used to stand behind him when he was speaking, with a musical instrument, such as is used as an accompaniment to singing, and whenever he observed that the voice of Caius was becoming harsh and broken through passion, he would produce a soft note, upon which Caius would immediately moderate his voice and become calm." Our Caius may learn a lesson from him of Rome.

## VII.

## THE TREASURY WHIPPER-IN.

Once, and once only, Mr Gladstone was known to speak against time. The occasion was in the debate on the third reading of the bill for the Repeal of the Paper Duty. All at once it became apparent to the Government that they were in danger; by outward signs and symptoms it was made manifest to the most obtuse of them that their foes were more numerous than their friends, and that a division under such circumstances would be fatal. Lord Palmerston, who has a happy faculty of sleeping all the evening like Lord North, was wide awake; Lord John Russell displayed anxiety; Mr Gibson, it was very evident, was ill at ease, as were the rest of the gentlemen who generally sit in very ungraceful postures on the Treasury Bench. To be beaten was the destruction of the Palmerston Administration; destruction of that administration was to every individual member of it, for a longer or shorter interval of time—perhaps for ever—

loss of place; and loss of place means loss of influence —loss of rank—loss of salary—loss of everything the politician strives to gain. In such circumstances there is nothing like a Fabian policy, and there is nothing more desirable than a long speech. The man who speaks longest speaks best. Happily, Mr Gladstone was on his legs, and there is no man who has such a wonderful faculty of speaking as himself, and on the occasion to which I refer the hon. gentleman very wisely exerted that faculty to the utmost. He (says an eye-witness) started vigorously enough, dashed with impetuous brevity through a great part of the subject, on which he might have advantageously insisted; but all of a sudden he began to wind round and round, over and over again came the same arguments in almost the same words, and for once the Chancellor of the Exchequer was—not almost, but I should say quite—prosy. To an *habitué* of the House, however, the cause was obvious. The Treasury Whipper-in was seen flitting about in and out, backwards and forwards, to the Treasury Bench, with an anxious and perturbed aspect of countenance. Sir Wm. Hayter, too, was moving about very much as he used to do when he was in office—in fact, he was evidently imitating the retired tallow-chandler, who used to go down to the shop on melting days; while ever and anon white-waistcoated gentlemen, evidently dragged from the opera or evening parties, were silently filling the ministerial benches. The

whip was severe and unrelenting. However, at last the Treasury Whipper-in entered the House, and sat down upon the Treasury Bench with an air of complacent satisfaction—the thing was done—narrowly, but effectually; and then the Chancellor of the Exchequer sat down also. In spite of Mr. Disraeli's reply, all ground of anxiety had been removed, and the ministry had a majority—not a large one, but a majority, when they were on the verge of defeat. How was it that this defeat was averted, that the ministry were saved, that the bill for the Repeal of the Paper Duty was carried? The answer is—by the exertions of the Treasury Whipper-in.

It was once my good fortune to behold Lord John Russell smile and carry on a friendly conversation on the Government benches of the British House of Commons. Generally his lordship is cold and dignified in his demeanour, as becomes a man who is part and parcel of that wonderful machine—the British Constitution. The individual with whom he was conversing was rather under the average size, of slim build, very plainly dressed, and with one of those fresh, ruddy, whiskerless faces which make even an old man look young. It was clear that he was a good Whig, and of an old family, otherwise Lord John would have been a little less friendly. It was also clear that he was in office, or he would not have been sitting by the side of premiers and Chancellors of the Exchequer; and yet his was not a face familiar to me as a man who had

won his position by any talent, oratorical or administrative, of his own; the name of the gentleman was Brand—a reference to "Dod" informed me that he was the second son of the twentieth Baron Dacre; that he was private secretary to Sir George Grey; that he was "averse to large organic changes;" that he was returned for Lewes for the first time in 1852; and that on the formation of the Palmerston Cabinet he was promoted to the office held so long and ably by Sir William Goodenough Hayter. After all, the general reader is still in the dark with regard to Mr Brand. He says to me, "Here is a man, born in 1814, in the prime of life, not memorable for any great work or act, yet you give him a niche in your gallery of modern statesmen. How is this? What you quote from 'Dod' in no way enlightens me." Wait awhile, my anxious inquirer. I frankly confess that, after all, you are very little the wiser when I give you Mr Dod's facts. There is a society called the Tract Society—of the merits or demerits of which it is not for me to speak here—the travelling agent of that society was an immensely stout man. On one occasion that agent called at a clergyman's house in a provincial town. The clergyman's daughter ran laughing into her father's study, "Papa, here's the Tract Society come." In the same way Mr Brand is that awful personage—THE BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM. He smiles and you are returned for Rottenborough, and the newspapers trumpet the glorious triumph of liberal

principles. He frowns and you are unseated for bribery and corruption. Be on good terms with Mr Brand, and you are elected into the Reform Club; you get that little place in the Circumlocution-office for your son; your wife has a ticket for one of Lady Palmerston's brilliant assemblies. When the Duke of Wellington said in the excitement occasioned by the passing of the Reform Bill, he did not see how the king's government could be carried on, he forgot Mr Brand. By the aid of Mr Brand nothing is easier. Sir W. Hayter, Mr Brand's predecessor, was a model in this respect, and still, I think, does a good deal of amateur whipping-in. If I could catch him a moment I would point him out. Here he is. "What, by the door?" No, he is in the lobby; no, he is gone into the House; no, he is out. Ah! here he comes; but you can't see him, for he in the midst of a group. But see! he has stepped on one side to read a note. That is he—that sharp-featured, active-looking man! a cross, as it were, between a rollicking Irishman and an English merchant, all the shrewdness of the one and the fun of the other; in person square-built and not very tall, but ever agile, and seemingly a model of the art of perpetual motion. In the same way Mr Brand is always on duty. You will see him in the lobby before the Speaker is at prayers; after the Speaker has done his prayers; long after the gas has been turned on, far into the night, ofttimes far into the early morn. Mr Brand dwells in the lobby. It is not known that

he sleeps anywhere, with the exception of forty winks on the Treasury benches, nor that he partakes of meals except during the parliamentary recess. He says to one, "Come," and he cometh—to another, "Go," and he goeth. He is friendly with every one, and manages to talk to a dozen people at once. He holds one by the button, he administers to another a dig in the ribs, at another he winks, another he accosts in a free and easy manner. He slaps the peers on the back, and shakes hands even with Irish M.P.'s. His duty is, as Canning—no fourth-rate man, as a contemporary ludicrously calls him—said, "to make a House, and keep a House, and cheer the minister." On one occasion Canning wrote:—

> "Cheer him as his audience flag,
> Brother Hiley, Brother Bragge,
> Cheer him as he hobbles vilely,
> Brother Bragge, and Brother Hiley."

Brothers Bragge and Hiley were the Treasury Whippers-in of their day. Mr Brand is, perhaps, the most powerful man in the House of Commons. Let him over-sleep himself—let him have a fit of indigestion—let him be laid up with the gout—and immediately the Liberal Cabinet is *in extremis*, and the nation is plunged into all the horrors of a crisis. How comes this about? you very naturally ask. You tell me you do not hear of Mr Brand's eloquence; you do not see his name in Hansard; it does not seem to you that he shines in debate. Well, the answer to this question

will let you into one of the secrets of the British constitution—a secret that you will not discover, however attentively you may study Blackstone or De Lolme. Gentle reader, you cannot be so green as to suppose that, in any country under the sun, men are guided to their conclusions simply by means of the debates of public assemblies; you cannot be so green even as to believe that these discussions have anything to do with the subsequent decision. Pre-eminently in the British House of Commons this is not the case, and the consequence is that the debate does not influence the decision, but is merely the apology for it. The premier makes his speech, and he leaves his whipper-in to make up the majority. Mr Brand is the Ministerial Whipper-in; hence it is that he is always in the lobby finding pairs—laying hold of this—preventing that from escaping; and that his means of communication reach to the clubs, to the opera, as well as to the smoking-room and library of the House of Commons. The fact is, we are governed by the whip; nor could we wish otherwise. Mr Disraeli, in his Life of Lord George Bentinck, speaks of the creation of a third political party as "a result at all times and under any circumstances difficult to achieve, and which had failed even under the auspices of accomplished and experienced statesmen." Sir Robert Peel understood this. In a letter written to Mr Gregory he says, "What must have been the inevitable fate of a government composed of Goulburn, Sir John Beckett, Wetherel,

and myself—supported by very warm friends, no doubt, but those warm friends being prosperous country gentlemen—foxhunters, &c. &c.; most excellent men, who will attend one night, but who will not leave their favourite pursuits to sit up till two or three o'clock fighting questions of detail, on which, however, a government must have a majority, we could not have stood creditably a fortnight,"—that is, in other words, the hon. baronet felt that his party would not respond to the whip. The French republicans failed because they could not understand this, and for a similar reason the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the respectable parish vestries of St Pancras or Marylebone, seem in a disorganised and chaotic state, and succeed in doing such little business. During the recent Reform Debates more than one effort was made to count out the House of Commons, and yet let there be anything supremely unimportant of a personal nature, such as that squabble between Messrs Horsman and Walters, and the House is crammed in every part. When a discussion respecting our three hundred millions of Indian subjects is raised, I have often seen less than forty members present. One advantage of this is that even the dullest dog in the House gets his say, for if the House be thin—and why should any sane man be compelled to listen to a lawyer talking for promotion, or to a borough representative airing the dictionary for the exclusive benefit of his own constituents?—the Whipper-in knows where all his men are,

and will bring them up when the division bell rings and the serious business of the evening has commenced. Without the so-called whip, Parliamentary government is almost an impossibility—the assembly, with its eternal talk, would fall into contempt, and all power would pass into the hands of the Crown. Make the experiment on a small scale—get a hundred honest, intelligent men together—each man with a theory of his own and a grievance, and what would be the result? Why, that nothing whatever could be done. There are votes taken every night in which the majority of members take no earthly interest; yet these votes are essential to the carrying on of the Queen's Parliament. Now, in the House of Commons, by means of the party and the whip, actually some progress is made. Here, in England, so much business is taken off by the municipalities, that our Parliament is far less laden than the French Assembly; yet, if all our legislators were honest, independent freemen, disdainful of party and disobedient to this influence, we should split up into helplessness and fatuity similar to that of the French. It is the application of the whip that makes the House of Commons a working assembly, and preserves us from the horrors of despotism.

Dreamers and theorists—political babes and sucklings—may tell me that a Whipper-in is the result of parliamentary corruption—that we should be better without him—that such as he are a fearful sign of the times; but if jobs must be done—if little arrange-

ments must be made—if, in other words, people require to be looked after, the Whipper-in is the man to do it. Parliament is a self-seeking assembly, and to buy every man at his own valuation would be evidently a bad bargain for the people. Indeed, the Whipper-in is most useful to his party. He will supply Liberal candidates to any amount; he will judiciously distribute the Government advertisements and patronage; he will make the needful arrangements with the Opposition as to the public business; he will reconcile uneasy consciences to the unpleasant task of renouncing in Parliament the pledges they made when out. I confess—unflinching patriot though I be—my mouth waters as I think of the good things the Whipper-in has at his disposal; and I rush away from the lobby exclaiming, "Lead me not into temptation; but deliver me from evil."

## VIII.

# JOHN ARTHUR ROEBUCK.

Are there honest men in the world of politics? and if so, are they the better or the worse for their honesty? These are questions to be asked, and if you will, answered; or, to come to particulars, would John Arthur Roebuck have been more successful, as men reckon success, had he been less honest? The honourable gentleman would reply in the affirmative. The public must form its own opinion. When the great Chatham entered the House of Commons, Walpole exclaimed, "We must muzzle that terrible cornet of horse." The muzzling process is believed to exist at this day. We have seen wonders effected, and we naturally suspect a cause. When Mr Bernal Osborne, after years of silence and peace, utters his wild shriek of liberty, we naturally come to a conclusion that his seat on the Treasury Bench is insecure. On Irish members the muzzling process is very apparent. Under its soothing influence the roaring patriot aggravates his voice

and sings very small indeed. But the man gets his place, and we clap our hands. In success there is manifestly a saving grace. If a man has that we honour him. We stop not to inquire how he has succeeded. If he has betrayed his party, if he has sworn oaths and broken them, if he has said one thing one day and another the next, if he has worn one face on the hustings and another in St Stephen's, he is honoured nevertheless; just as people flatter the lucky speculator, the successful tradesman, the great mill-owner, and never stop to inquire by what sharp practice, by what ingenious dishonesty, or gross fraud, the wealth thus venerated has been acquired. In these days it is not the rogues that walk in mud. Ah me! but yesterday, in the slush and rain and cold, I met one born in humble life, but dowered with a beauty for which many a Belgravian lady would sell her soul. Vainly I looked for the loveliness of an earlier day. Care and want had furrowed her brow, and had thinned the luxuriant locks, and had dimmed the lustre of eyes once bright as pearls, and paled the red lips and rosy cheek. In this great city, where sin exists without the sense of shame, she had retained her honesty, but at what a price! *Quid rides?* as Mr Thackeray, with his immense erudition, comprising at least a part of the Latin Grammar, would say. I felt in that poor creature's presence as if at the shrine of a saint. Thus I do not indicate that Cato is an idiot because he is alone, poor, neglected, because his struggles have been

great and his successes small. A man who will find fault with all parties, will expose officials, will oppose himself to the prejudices and passions of the hour, will blame the narrowness of the Church, and yet at the same time express his abhorrence of the intolerance of dissent, cannot look for popularity. Nay more, if we suspect Cato of occasional injustice, if he himself evinces temper and passion, if he shows a sternness in some quarters where we should expect forbearance, and a forbearance where we should look for sternness, if he is occasionally conveniently dumb or inconveniently fussy, especially if he gets mixed up with a dirty job, like a Galway contract for instance,—if our Cato considers himself master of every subject, if he be always obtruding himself before better men, like Talkative in the Pilgrim's Progress, exclaiming, "I will talk of things heavenly or things earthly—things moral or things evangelical—things sacred or things profane—things past or things to come—things foreign or things at home—things more essential or things circumstantial,"—perhaps we shall understand how it is Cato is not held in more honour, and shall see that the public are not so much to blame as at first sight may appear.

It is half-past four, and we are standing in the lobby of the House of Commons. A very little man, leaning on a stick, comes tottering towards us. He is shabbily dressed, and seems very, very feeble. Poor man, you piteously exclaim, why are you here in this unhealthy

atmosphere—in this fierce arena? Why seek you to wrestle with these athletes when you were better at Malvern or Scarborough, or some other locality sacred to Hygeia? Such are your natural reflections. They are not, however, those of the subject of them. His feeling evidently is quite otherwise. You can imagine him saying, "I am plain John Arthur Roebuck, friend of the people, advocate of progress, and champion of the rights of man. Out of the way, O ye blind leaders of the blind; are ye not, every mother's son of you, nincompoops, pudding-headed and asinine windbags—shams? Have ye not blundered and placed England on the brink of perdition? I say, go home, and I, John Arthur Roebuck, must save her, or she is lost for ever." It is true that when Mr Roebuck has had the field to himself he has not been eminently successful. He was Chairman of the Administrative Reform Association; where is it now? He was Chairman of the Western Bank—a bubble that has long been burst. He was Chairman of the Sebastopol Committee; yet how impotent were its conclusions! He was one of the great men of the Galway Steam Packet Company, and in some quarters a belief was entertained that this was a bubble. Surely a gentler style of criticism, a little less arrogancy of manner, a little less virulence of invective, is becoming to a man whose failures have been so numerous!

Let me describe Mr Roebuck as I saw him on the night when he made his motion for the appointment of

the Sebastopol Committee. Imagine yourself, intelligent reader, in the Speaker's Gallery. Glancing down the gangway, on the Ministerial side, there stands a little man with a hooked nose and a face indicative of weakness and premature decay. The tones of his voice are faint and sickly; his action is feeble. He forgets what he is going to say in a manner painful to witness. He rubs his hand across his forehead, and tries to catch the missing train of thought—but in vain; it is gone from him for ever. The House listens kindly, and cheers, but all in vain. There he stands—he whose winged words were sharper than arrows, whose sting was that of an adder, whose imperious tone, his hand pointing all the while, as if to say, "Thou art the man," drove conscience home to the most careless, and made the most phlegmatic writhe, who seemed to scalp his victim, as it were, and the fear of whom was a principle in many a heart—there he stands with opportunity, the grand thing he had been panting for all his ambitious life, at length his own. The time at length came for which he had prayed since earliest youth—a grand drama, and a grand part to act in it for himself. And oh! the mockery of life, the power gone, and the golden moments lost for ever. The sight was a sad and an affecting one, and when poor Roebuck sat down, for a wonder for once the House was subdued, and hushed and still. Pity for the speaker allayed all hostility. It seemed as if no one cared to create a debate—as if the spectacle of a popu-

lar statesman struck down in the moment of what was to have been his triumph was of its kind as sad as that of a gallant army mouldering away beneath administrative imbecility and neglect.

At a public meeting held not very long since at Sheffield, Mr Roebuck endeavoured to answer the question how it was that he, unconnected with the great parties in the State, not of the great families, undistinguished by wealth, unknown to fame, should have won the approbation and confidence of his countrymen. Warming with his theme he exclaimed, "It is not talent, it is not name, it is not rank, it is not wealth, it is stedfastness in that path which I had marked out for myself in the beginning. I am proud to say that in the year 1832 I published a programme of the opinions I then held. I had prepared myself for a public life, I had then formed my opinions, and I consigned them to paper. I printed them, and to them I now adhere. That which I said in 1832 I say now, and it is my firm and my stedfast adherence to the opinions I then expressed which has now won for me the confidence of my countrymen. Going into Parliament unknown, unsupported, and only recommended by that true friend of the people, Joseph Hume, I determined not to ally myself to either of the great parties then dividing the House of Commons and the kingdom. To that rule I have adhered through life, and no man can now say I am either Whig or Tory." Roebuck, then, may be described as a

Radical politician, but of a Radicalism of so singular a character as to induce him to side and seat himself with the Opposition rather than with the supporters of Government. He sits now on the gangway on the Opposition side. Gentlemen whose opinions are supposed most to resemble his own he cannot abide. It seems strange now that he has even acquired the reputation he has; yet there was a time when many competent judges of all the orators of the House delighted chiefly in John Arthur Roebuck, and deemed the skill with which he unmasked a job—the delight with which he brought it before the House—the invective which he directed against all parties connected with it, inimitable. On the whole, now, Mr Roebuck may be pronounced a failure—that is, other men, less gifted, less honest, less popular, have been more successful. The cause is chiefly in an unhappy temperament; a temperament which makes him always go in an opposite direction to what is required. To get Mr Roebuck on your side you must beg him to speak against you. Sydney Smith used to say of certain individuals, Mr S. is a clubable man. Now the House of Commons after all is a club, and Mr Roebuck is not a clubable man. This is the primary cause. Another is the vanity which makes him insist on playing first fiddle, *Aut Cæsar aut nullus* is his motto.

Again, Mr Roebuck has exhibited another great fault, he has not trusted in himself. He has shown the vanity, and, I may add, the weakness of a woman.

His duel with Mr Black of the *Morning Chronicle*, his endeavour to get the *Times* censured in the House for a description of the honourable gentleman which every one who heard it confessed to be singularly truthful and exact, his impotent attempt to put Mr Disraeli down when the latter had but just made his parliamentary debut, his vindictive attack, only very recently, on Dr Mitchell, the ex-Bodmin M.P., who plainly confessed to the House, and in a way which gained for him lasting honour, that it was true that he had agreed to retire from the representation of his borough rather than stay to fight the petition which had been presented with regard to his seat, for the simple reason that he was a poor man comparatively speaking, and had not the money requisite for a parliamentary defence; such things as these deservedly lower Mr Roebuck's position in the House, and with all right-thinking men all over the country. Were Mr Roebuck less impulsive, less irritable, less jealous of himself, he would spare his friends and supporters the repetition of such painful scenes. After enjoying the courtesies of the French at Cherbourg, could anything be more execrable than his insulting references to the women renowned all the world over for fascinations, which might even for a moment have soothed Mr Roebuck into civility and good temper? It is not thus that public men should act, and sure are we that the public man who thus acts must have great talents, great industry, great honesty, to hold up his head in the

face of such things. Granting Mr Roebuck to have done the state some service as a politician and a man of letters, though in this latter capacity he has not greatly shone in his day, it is obvious that his worst foe has been himself, and that if he had, like all truly great men, been above the suggestions of a childish vanity, he would by this time have taken a higher stand. His success must be in himself, in the verdict of his own heart, in the consciousness that he has been true to his mission, that he has not swerved aside for man's smile or frown. Political independence is rare, and is chiefly affected by eccentricities such as the late Colonel Sibthorp, or Mr Drummond. In the case of Mr Roebuck it is often an obstacle in the path of political progress. In spite of Mr Roebuck's pertinacious egotism, that makes him represent himself as the utterance of the public, he must feel that he is not that.

Mr Roebuck's references to himself at all times are amusing. We infer, as we glance at his speeches, public education has prospered because it has had Mr Roebuck's support. On a very recent occasion the severest censure he could pass upon Lord John Russell was, that he had failed to consult Mr Roebuck. I am the good dog Tearem, says Mr Roebuck, who guard the lambs who would otherwise be torn to pieces by the ravenous wolf. I am the man, he told the Sheffield people the other day, who says hard things, as if hard-hitting was the *sine qua non* of statesmanship. A man in public life should have no mock modesty; in Mr

Roebuck's case bashfulness has not certainly been carried to excess. An oracle, it was said, warned the Athenians against a man who alone was opposed to the whole city. Phocion claimed the honour of such singularity for himself. When one of his proposals was received with unusual approbation, he turned round to his friends and asked whether he had let anything escape him that was wrong. Bishop Thirlwall tells us, "In his speeches he carefully avoided all rhetorical embellishments, which he had learnt from Plato to consider as a kind of flattery unworthy an honest man, and studied a sententious brevity," which, however, was so enlivened with wit and humour, as often to make a deeper impression than the most elaborate periods. It was even observed by one of his adversaries that Demosthenes was the best orator, but Phocion the most powerful speaker. And Demosthenes himself, it is said, trembled for the effect of his eloquence when Phocion rose after him, and would whisper to his friends, "Here comes the hatchet to my speech." Mr Roebuck is, and he seems to pride himself on it, the Phocion of the House of Commons. He must stand alone. He can bear no rival near his throne. He can be as severe on John Bright as Mr Disraeli, on friends as foes. The right of private judgment, carried to excess, is the vice of modern society, according to Mr Gladstone's teaching in his "Church and its Relation to the State," and by no one living statesman is this right more rigidly guarded, or occa-

sionally more inconveniently displayed, than by Mr Roebuck.

His non-success, considered in a worldly point of view, may be in some degree the result of the fact that he has stedfastly set his face against complying with the conditions which insure success. No one ever asked him to play the part of the tribune of the people. The parties in the House are Whig and Tory, and the electors out-of-doors are either the one or the other. It is true the names are rarely heard, but the essential division remains the same. There were Radicals when Mr Roebuck took his seat for Bath. As he tells us, he has not changed in his opinions since 1832. Well, when he first entered Parliament, there had been the greatest political convulsion known in England since 1688. Democracy, flushed with triumph, like a giant refreshed with wine, trod the land. The privileged classes were in despair, and peers and bishops trembled for their very heads. The reäction had not set in which in so short a time nearly undid all the good that the Bill had effected. The mistake of John Arthur Roebuck was in supposing that it never would—that the Reform Bill had ushered in a new era—that the days of corruption and ignorance and darkness were past—that Parliament was to be a grand reality, and that henceforth the people, enlightened, passionless, high-toned, indignant at all petty meannesses, impatient of all party frauds, were to rule the land. In this estimate, in sorrow and shame

be it known, Mr Roebuck made an egregious mistake. To struggle up from the people, not by pandering to the ruling classes, nor to the prejudice of the mob, nor to the caprices of the peers, is a Herculean task. The great Sir Robert Peel is an admirable illustration of a successful tactician. He sought power, we grant, for public not personal ends: yet how did he acquire that power? By the most unscrupulous pandering to the passions and prejudices of party. What Protestant prejudices—what Tory prejudices—what Protectionist prejudices—received the sanction of his support, and yet what ruin he wrought to the very prejudices he had not feebly advocated, but solemnly and at times sanctimoniously upheld. Still he succeeded, and became England's model statesman. Roebuck has been the reverse of all this. Not only has he not supported national prejudices, but he has declaimed against them as illogical and absurd. This is a bad plan. If you wish to become a popular statesman, as a democrat, attack the aristocracy; as a dissenter, expose the failures of the State Church; as a churchman, exhibit the weakness and bitterness of dissent; or, as philanthropy is in vogue, become the furious partisan of some of the movements by which a remedy is vainly sought for evils that have resulted from the complications of ages, and you are sure of a party to blow your trumpet and to follow in your wake—to swear that you are a heaven-born statesman, and that you will be immortal. Roebuck has been a standing protest against all this.

He has carried this protest to an absurd extent; he has become the victim of this feeling. A life spent in unsuccessful invective has soured him. He reminds us of the hero of Tennyson's "Vision of Sin," as he exclaims

> "Unto me my maudlin gall,
> And my mockeries of the world."

## IX.

# LORD STANLEY.

GIBBON tells us, "of the various forms of government which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that on the father's decease the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and himself?" The language of Gibbon is not altogether inapplicable to hereditary statesmanship. Why should the tenth transmitter of a foolish face be a ruler over men whose natures he cannot understand and with whose wants it is impossible for him to sympathize? Surely the son of a lord is born no wiser, abler, stronger-minded than his fellows. Is he not very often born considerably less so, and, at any rate, does he not labour under one great damning disadvantage, that he has no wholesome struggle from his youth upwards; that his impetuous will has never been disciplined by wise con-

trol; that the very conditions—I mean the struggle with hard necessity and adverse circumstances without which most men would pass their days in epicurean ease—by means of which it is given to a man to become great, are denied him from his birth. An Englishman crawls in the dust before a lord. When can he hear the stern and unwelcome voice of truth? How can he understand the condition-of-England question? Poverty is almost romantic in the eyes of the rich. A great duke lives in Brighton because he cannot afford to live in one of his own palatial residences. The poor man is not thus encumbered,—he has no need to trouble himself with settlements and lawyers; nor is he required to subscribe to the county charities—to preside at anniversary dinners—to dance attendance at court,—nor has he his every movement recorded in the morning papers. See Strephon on a bank reclining, in a costume very Arcadian, and very much like what we see at the Adelphi, on the occasion of a rustic fête. Hear him sing,

"At ease reclined, in rustic state,
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indigent the great!"

Who would not be Strephon rather than your much-to-be-pitied lord! Indeed so over-weighted is the latter that he generally performs even his political duties by proxy. But we are entering on a question

respecting which there may be different opinions. We imagine all will admit that Lord Edward Henry Stanley, eldest son of the Earl of Derby, born at Knowsley, Lancashire, 1826, is the ablest argument we have in favour of hereditary statesmanship. *Primâ facie*, a man who has an impediment in his speech, so that his utterance is unpleasant and imperfect, stands a poor chance of being elected into an assembly one great qualification for which is more or less of oratorical power. To read a speech is yet more an outrage on our English ideas; yet Lord Stanley did this not very long since. To be a refined thinker—to go down to the core and kernel of things—unfits a man for the use of the usual party expressions, which unless you use you may vainly long for a parliamentary position. James Stuart Mill, our greatest writer on political and social science, has not a seat in the House of Commons; our profoundest Greek historian, Mr Grote, we know declined to stand for Westminster, on account of the impossibility of coming to a good understanding with its noisy and vehement democrats. Lord Stanley's statesmanship is of a similar high order. Yet, when Lord George Bentinck died, he was elected his successor as M.P. for Walpole's favourite borough of King's Lynn. How is it that Lord Stanley has thus made a good start in public life? The answer is soon given—he is the son of his father, and that father, one of England's leading landlords;

that father, if not one of the most eminent politicians of the age, at any rate is one of the most eloquent speakers in any legislative assembly in the world.

In his "Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Second," old Horace Walpole, then Earl of Orford, apologizing for the unfavourable light in which he places many of his former characters, says:—"If, after all, many of the characters are bad, let it be remembered that the scenes I describe passed in the highest life, the soil, the vices I like." This is a little severe, and, let us hope, not quite so true in the days of Queen Victoria as King George. But when a young nobleman scorns delight, and lives laborious days, it must be admitted on all sides he deserves well of his country. From his youth upward, Lord Stanley has done this. He was a pupil of Dr Arnold, of Rugby; and we all know how, when Dr Arnold's pupils came up to Oxford, there was found to be in them a thoughtfulness, a conscientiousness, a sense of duty, rare in men so young, and by means of which they were favourably contrasted with the alumni of other public schools. This was a confession, as we all know, fairly and honourably made by Arnold's opponents. In Lord Stanley's case, this result is very manifest; and no doubt it was this that led him—while the unfledged lordlings of his own rank and standing were wearing white waistcoats, and writing very indifferent poetry, and astonishing heaven and earth by Young England affectation—to leave home, and, by means of foreign travel, to enlarge his views

and liberalise his ideas. As soon as he was of age, Lord Stanley spent some time in Canada and America. His next step was to the West Indies, to study the results of negro emancipation, and the condition of the sugar plantations. He next paid a visit to the East, and was still in India when nominated, in March, 1852, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Derby Ministry. These visits have borne fruit. Lord Stanley learnt much ; got rid of many exploded ideas, became wiser, as all men should do who stand face to face with the truth of things and the facts of life. As a social reformer, Lord Stanley is widely known. Few men have done more with regard to the encouragement of mechanics' institutes, the establishment of public libraries, and the promotion of popular education. When, in 1858, he was made President of the Indian Board, by his introduction of the competitive system into the service he gave an impulse to education among the middle classes which it is almost impossible to over-estimate. His philanthropy is thus of the highest and most practical character—of that character which acknowledges that human affairs are conducted on general principles, that suffering and human degradation are, as a rule, the result of a violation of law, and that the remedy is to be found, not so much in Acts of Parliament, or temporary expedients, as in the enlightenment, moral and intellectual, of the sufferers themselves. Many are the nostrums of our day. In vain are baths and wash-houses, in vain are flannel-waistcoats and

thick boots, in vain are good meals and a good atmosphere, in vain are Saturday half-holidays and an abridgment of the hours of labour, in vain are the wonderful mechanical improvements of our day, if the people suffer from lack of knowledge, and the night of ignorance lies heavily on the land. As a politician, Lord Stanley is hard to define. Dod describes him as a Conservative, but in favour of the admission of Jews to Parliament, of the Maynooth grant, and of the exemption of Dissenters from church-rates. When his father has been in office, Lord Stanley has been one of most valuable supporters in the Lower House. Yet when, in 1855, the death of Sir W. Molesworth created a vacancy in the Colonial-office, Lord Palmerston, sensible of Lord Stanley's talents and popularity, offered him the seals of that department. More than once Lord Stanley has been named as a probable holder of office under the present premier; and if, at the last election, he had come forward as a candidate for the city of London—and a numerously-signed requisition was got up to that effect—it is not clear but that he would have been selected by the City in preference to one of the present M.P.'s. The fact that such a belief existed indicates Lord Stanley's liberality. With another well-known Liberal of a still more ultra character, Lord Stanley is supposed to have held amicable relations. In the House of Commons' smoking-room the interviews between Lord Stanley and John Bright are said to have been of a very frequent and

confidential nature. They both of them have this in common—that they belong to the higher order of statesmen, though their respective standpoints are wide as the poles asunder. They may yet sit side by side on the Treasury Benches. Lord Stanley must, sooner or later, cut the old country Quarter Sessions party that feasted so greatly at St James's Hall the other day, under the presidency of Lord John Manners. As it is, his temporary alliance with them has damaged him, for people find it difficult to make allowances for a man of trained judgment, and with an understanding well cultivated, doing anything so unnatural as leading the forlorn hope of a retrograde party in church and state,—and surely the Indians, native or otherwise, have reason to complain that because some poor Whigs wanted to get back into office, Lord Stanley was driven out, and his place supplied by a third-rate official like Sir Charles Wood, a man who is always —what Lord Stanley never is—common-place. This leads me to the great characteristic of Lord Stanley. He has less of mere partisanship and more of elevated principle, perhaps, than any other man in Parliament. He has thought out his own conclusions; he has strength of mind sufficient to rely on them. He is superior to the prejudices of the hour. Never does he stoop to pander to the delusions of the mob; he is the last man in the world to talk what the Americans call "Bunkum." He has a system to fall back on, and

this is a great advantage in these days of incoherent action and chaotic legislation.

Come into the House of Commons. Some grand display of force is expected—some question touching the hearts and arousing the passions of men is being discussed—some crisis is at hand. On the front bench of the Opposition, seated between Disraeli and Sir John Pakington, is a young-looking, slender figure, much more plainly dressed than the great exponent of the Asiatic mystery, and by no means so elaborately neat as the worthy late First Lord of the Admiralty. His features are small, his complexion is light, his countenance pale, his figure slim, and the expression of his face slightly haughty; but this is not discernible in the Strangers' Gallery. You see, however, that he is an intensely earnest listener, that not a word of the debate escapes him, that he occasionally takes notes, and occasionally speaks to his friends around him, as if in consultation. It may be that he rises to speak, and your curiosity is aroused. When you hear the Speaker announce Lord Stanley's name, you lean forward, for the House cheers, and the speaker is evidently a favourite. What! you cannot hear a word, though every one is silent as a cat? Ah! now you will hear, the voice is filling the place, and, by-and-by, will float up to you. Alas! alas! there is a sound, it is true, as of a man speaking; but it may be Greek, or Hebrew, or Chaldee, that he is speaking, for aught you know to the contrary. Nature has not been so bountiful to the

son as to the sire, yet you will see that the House listens with interest, that the argument tells, and when you read the speech in the *Times* next day, you will think that the speech was one of the best of the night. It is a fine illustration of the triumph of mind over matter, and shows, as we have said, that statesmanship may exist, of the highest qualities, without the possessor of them being an orator at all. Out of doors, this would be a defect; it would unfit a man to succeed in making new truths popular. In the House of Commons, where declamation avails but little, it is a slight drawback, which is soon overlooked, when a man works so hard and so successfully, as patriot and statesman, as Lord Stanley does.

Poor Bruff, who died prematurely the other day, tells us:—

> "My Lord Tomnoddy's the son of an Earl,
> His hair is straight but his whiskers curl;
> His lordship's forehead is far from wide,
> But there 's plenty of room for the brains inside.
> He writes his name with indifferent ease,
> He 's rather uncertain about the d's,
> But what does it matter, if three or one,
> To the Earl of Fitzdotterel's eldest son?"

Lord Stanley does not belong to this class. He accepts his rank and station, and at the same time its responsibilities. He is as much aware of the duties as the rights of property, and he is willing to lend the prestige of his name to institutions not exactly orthodox in conservative eyes. As regards sire and son, the

order of nature seems to have been completely reversed. The son has an old head on young shoulders—he has been ever wise, and prudent, and thoughtful beyond his years. The father, when a commoner in the Lower House, always managed to keep Ireland in hot water —to goad on the colonies almost to the verge of revolt; and in the Upper House has been great in winning barren victories, and in leading his party into office merely to lead them ingloriously out again—after the commission of a few jobs such as those at Dover or Galway. Describing the present Earl when in the House of Commons, a writer in 1839 says, "Stanley hits very hard: but he does not inflict so much as he feels. See him when he has sat down and some opponent is lashing him in his turn. At the commencement he probably sits in a lounging posture, with his feet cocked up upon the table, an attitudinous elegance which he probably learned in America, and with an expression of mockery and supreme contempt upon his features. As his castigator proceeds, however, the feet are taken down and forced under his seat—he tosses up his head, whispers to his neighbour, laughs, then seizes some parliamentary paper, and bending his elbows on his knees pretends to be deeply absorbed in it—but the smarting soon becomes intolerable, and he either springs forward and, without the slightest reason, calls the speaker to order, or, after starting to his feet, suddenly restrains himself, throws himself back again, opens and shuts his knees, and

affords proof, that cannot be mistaken, of the severity of his sufferings, and the agony of his impatience." The present Lord Stanley is the reverse of all this—of course something is due to training. The Earl of Derby tells us he was born in the pre-scientific era. Lord Stanley has had an advantage in this respect—the politics of the present times are also calmer and less fraught with personal collision; but I imagine nature has cast the son in a more philosophical mould than the eloquent and impulsive sire.

## X.

## THE RT. HON. T. MILNER GIBSON, M.P.

Did my readers ever travel in the east of England?—a part of the world not suggestive of the fact that the wise men came from the East, but nevertheless a land of honest women and brave men—a land flowing with milk and honey in the shape of strong ale, turkeys, geese, and sausages. In the old coaching days, one of the finest sights in London in the winter time of year was to walk along Whitechapel and to meet the Essex, and Suffolk, and Norfolk coaches, all laden, not with live passengers, but dead stock. There were four horses; there was a coachman—perchance, a guard; but no coach was visible—not the ghost of a passenger—one mass of feathers and skins, of all colours, was the coach, all jumbled and jammed together like an omelet, or one of Turner's pictures. There were turkeys on their way to grace the table of a London alderman; there were pheasants, whose sweet fate was to be picked by the dainty fingers of

London's fairest daughters; anon out of this mass of fine feathers emerged a goose so corpulent as to remind the gazer of the poet's touching lines :—

> "Of all the poultry in the yard,
> The goose I have preferred—
> There is so much of nutriment
> In that weak-minded bird."

Or again, you saw a hare, but yesterday leaping along in lusty life—which had been shot and despatched to a friend in town, who, as he ate it—whether jugged, or hashed, or stewed—whether done into soup, or cooked *à la* Derrynane, or roasted, as is the manner of some, with Devonshire cream—would think, not ungratefully, of the donor and of the pleasant week or two spent, in the bright days of summer, under his hospitable roof. Ah, well! the old coaches are gone, but the east still abounds in good things, and is a land rich in agricultural produce; but the people are not a "fast" people, like those of London and Manchester. It was seldom you heard of Chartism there; and as to Socialism, the people yet shudder at the sound. The landlords are Conservative, the county representatives are Conservative, and a Conservative M.P. seems to be as natural a production of the soil as a Suffolk paunch or a prize bullock. In the thickest of this Conservative Paradise is a village called Theberton, in which was the residence of a Major Thomas Milner Gibson, who in the year 1807 had a son born to him.

The father was but little known. I presume he was a country gentleman, and lived after the manner of country gentlemen, when George III. was king; and, undoubtedly, his son was brought up in his own image, and after his own fashion.

The old divines tell us, "Man proposes and God disposes." You bring up your son to be a miser—he becomes a spendthrift; to be steady, he becomes gay; to be a Dissenter, and he becomes a Puseyite; to revere the memory of Calvin, and he vexes you and confuses himself with Thomas Carlyle. Young Milner Gibson had talent, ambition, and a good estate. Had he been a poor man he would have gone to the bar—been, possibly, Attorney-General to Sir Robert Peel—for Sir Robert was partial to rising talent—and been lost in the confusion which came upon the Conservative party when Lord Derby retired from office. As a country gentleman, Mr Gibson felt bound to serve his country; and as a country gentleman, to stand by his order. Hence, he began life as a true blue. I remember Sir Thomas Gooch, the *Gaffer* Gooch of one of Macaulay's political ballads, warranting him to be a regular Conservative colt; but it is dangerous to hazard anything where women, wine, and horses are concerned. The promising Conservative colt soon changed its colours, and was found running on the other side. This was in 1839, when Mr Gibson retired from the representation of immaculate Ipswich, and was defeated on again offering himself to his late

constituents. Mr Gibson's principles were changed—his career was not altered. At Cambridge, where he had been educated, and taken a wrangler's degree, he appeared as a candidate, but with little success. It seemed as if the reward of conviction was political annihilation. However, this was not for long. A public-spirited man with money is sure to get into parliament, if not for one place, why then for another.

In 1841, Manchester needed a representative, and Milner Gibson was returned for the seat, which he held with such honour till Manchester in its frenzy was guilty of the absurdity of stoning its prophets. When the Anti-Corn Law agitation came, Milner Gibson was one of its most successful orators, and succeeded in maintaining a position second, and only second, to Cobden and Bright. In 1846 the Whigs, anxious to please the people, and having personal objections to Cobden and Bright, made Milner Gibson Vice-President of the Board of Trade, but the Democracy of Manchester grew jealous of the divided affections of their member, and Mr Gibson resigned the office in 1849. The Corn-Law agitation over, Mr Gibson, far from used up, sighed for fresh worlds to conquer. At this time the Society for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge was in need of an efficient parliamentary advocate. Mr Gibson took that responsibility on himself. Season after season he called the attention of the House to the subject. He prevailed at length upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to repeal

the duty on advertisements. In 1855 he succeeded in abolishing the penny stamp on newspapers; and even when we had still war budgets, Mr Gibson tried hard for a repeal of the tax on paper. Mr Gibson certainly has not been rewarded for this as he ought. He was indefatigable in the prosecution of the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, and the society was nothing without him. It was Milner Gibson, the member for Manchester, who conferred on it respectability and power, who presided at its annual meetings in the metropolis, who got the public to attend them, who put the facts of the case in a telling way before the House of Commons, and by his tact and *bonhommie* secured parliamentary votes, which compelled the Chancellor of the Exchequer to interfere. The advocates of the repeal of the taxes on knowledge painted a glowing picture of the advantages that should ensue when those taxes were repealed. Cheap newspapers were the want of our times. It was because there were no cheap newspapers that the gaols were filled, and that the public-houses did a great business; it was because there were no cheap newspapers that, to the dim and downcast eyes of the people, Knowledge

> Her ample page,
> Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;

and it was because Mr Gibson took up the agitation that it triumphed, in spite of the opposition of the *Times* and the larger section of the press. And yet when the victory was won, I know not whether Mr

Milner Gibson scarce got thanks; certainly no public meeting assembled to do him honour, and no testimonial was collected in his praise. He had fought and won the battle of the people, and the people said never a word. It is well that the honest statesman labours for something more enduring than their hollow breath. In the increased supply of cheap literature—in the healthy character on the whole of that literature—in the consequent elevation, mental and moral, of the masses —in the stimulus thus given to the car of progress— Mr Gibson must alone seek his reward. It was the boast of the late Sir Robert Peel that by removing the shackles of trade—that by bidding commerce be free —that by giving to the men and women of this country cheap bread; he should have established his claim to be remembered gratefully long after he himself should have passed away. Lord John Russell has more than once greeted with approbation those well-worn lines in which the statesman is represented as filling the land with plenty, and as reading thanks in the nation's eyes. In a similar manner Mr Gibson may consider that he has deserved well of his country, for a land lying in ignorance, perishing for lack of knowledge, its mental eye dark and blind, can never become great, or noble, or free. Such as Mr Gibson may even claim the respect of the most timid Conservatives. No one fears a reading public—a public that does not read may be soon worked up into delirium and madness. At such times the demagogue may be mistaken for a sage,

but the reading public sees him to be what he is. The cheap press, like Ithuriel's spear, makes him reveal himself in his true and hideous light.

Let us follow the Ashton M.P. into the House. When he sat with the Manchester party, by the side of Cobden and Bright, he looked little like a Manchester man himself. There was about him far more of the air of the country gentleman and scholar; and you would imagine that he had got there merely for a chat, as his light, gay air by no means harmonized with the serious appearance of his colleagues. Mr Gibson always looks good-tempered and pleasant, and has been and is now rather a handsome-looking man; and not being blessed with large whiskers, has still rather a young and fresh appearance; but since he has become President of The Board of Trade and one of the Cabinet, he certainly has not improved in appearance. On the night when Lord Palmerston moved his celebrated resolutions I thought Mr Gibson looked peculiarly uncomfortable and disappointed, and I candidly confess no one likes to be balked of victory in the very hour of anticipated triumph. No doubt Mr Gibson went into the ministry to repeal the Paper duties. A reactionary House of Commons, and an innovating House of Lords, however, decided otherwise at the eleventh hour. With brown curly hair, light complexion, well-shaped features, and blue eyes, Mr Gibson was as fine a specimen of the Conservative colt as you would wish to see, with the frank and winning

manner of the English gentry of the better class. Nothing seemed to put him out; and even the country gentlemen, who regarded him with aversion,—who considered him as a traitor to their cause,—who remembered how he had been born and bred in their camp, and had now gone over to the enemy,—could not find it in their hearts to be very angry with a man who, after all, had been one of themselves. Mr Gibson's manner is conciliatory. He belongs to the extreme party, without seeming to be extreme. His voice is pleasant; it is not harsh, like Cobden's, or passionate, like Bright's. If you differ with him, you don't feel inclined to quarrel with him. Some men in the House are very apt to excite antagonism by the very sound of their voice. Mr Bright is an instance, Mr Newdegate is another; Roebuck makes you feel waspish immediately he is on his legs. It is a pity Mr Gibson does not speak oftener. Certainly office has a great tendency to make men dumb.

The Cobdenic policy, as illustrated in the person of Mr Gibson, loses much of its unpopular air. During the Russian war, Mr Gibson was, comparatively speaking, quiet. He did not prophesy, as Bright did, that, in a couple of years' time, it would land us in civil war; nor did he, like Cobden, misinterpret history, or write letters republished with glee at St Petersburg. Even while heading the crusade for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, he did not, with Cobden, hold up trumpery American papers as superior to such

papers as the *Times;* nor did he, with Mr Bright, charge the *Daily News* with ingratitude, because it dared to be independent. Even the *Saturday Review* has dealt gently with Mr Gibson; and yet quiet, pleasant-looking as he is, Mr Gibson can do a great deal of damage. He upset Lord Palmerston's first cabinet. To be sure the latter had his revenge, for he appealed to the country and got Manchester to reject her worthiest representatives. As member for Ashton-under-Lyne, Mr Gibson reappeared, and when the aged Premier got Manchester to endorse him as a first-rate liberal, Mr Gibson accepted a seat in the Cabinet. Mr Gibson has the credit, deservedly, of being one of the best tacticians in the House, but it is the opinion of some who know a little about these things, that in the ever-agile Premier he has found his match.

At the same time that Mr Gibson may not share the odium of the leaders of the Manchester party, he may not share their praise. He is a courageous advocate of progress, a flattering representative of Manchester, and a man of great platform power; but he is not, like Bright, a peace advocate on principle; nor could he have sacrificed everything, as Cobden did, to fight the battle of Free Trade. Mr Gibson's *debût* in the House was fortunate: it was on a subject on which he knew much. Some business connected with the Baltic had been occupying the attention of the House. Mr Gibson had just been up there in his yacht; consequently, he knew more about the subject

than any one else, and he told what he knew in a manner at once to win the ear of the House. On other matters, when he has spoken, he has been equally at home. He hits the feeling of the House in his speeches. He does not seem particularly in earnest, or particularly extreme. He is not savagely severe, or sublimely eloquent. You do not feel that he is trying to make a great speech, and to be quoted as a second Fox or Burke. Even when he acts the part of the tribune of the people, he has the air of a gentleman, and there is good-nature in his voice, and a merry twinkle in his eye. As long as democracy rejoices in such a representative, patricians need not shrink from it, or old ladies dream of Mirabeau and Robespierre. No noble lord need fear the working classes under the leadership of Mr Gibson. He, by birth, is a gentleman—was brought up at Cambridge —is the owner of a large landed estate; and if he listens to the manufacturers, and is on good terms with the bugbear of political dissent, and occasionally appears on the platform at St Martin's Hall, and casts in his lot with Cobden and Bright, it must be remembered that he at least has, even in the eyes of Spooner and Newdegate, a stake in the country, and is of the class who are supposed to be alone qualified for statesmanship, and office, and political rank.

## XI.

## SIR CHARLES NAPIER.

You are standing in the lobby of the House of Commons about 4 p.m.—just as the Speaker has passed by in all the pomp and majesty due to his awful rank, and are watching the varieties of costume and figure in which honourable M.P.'s rejoice. We will suppose it is the middle of the summer, and that the younger M.P.'s are got up in the most expensive and fashionable style. No one on the face of the earth dresses better than the English gentleman, and if you want to see the finest specimens of that splendid animal, you cannot do better than stand, for an hour or two, where now, mentally, we have placed you. A very old and curious figure approaches: it is that of an old man—short and stout, very bent, leaning heavily on a stick. Look at the man's dress. He does not ruin himself with tailors' bills. That old straw hat on his head is dear at a shilling; that tweed slop never could have cost more than a pound when new; that yellow waist-

coat and those white trousers evidently have seen better days. Look at the man's face. It is broad, cheerful—like that of most sailors—almost rollicking, in its expression; some old captain, you say, come to look about him. But look! he has passed the door-keeper. Surely that latter gentleman will call him back! By no means. The rough old sailor is no other than Sir Charles Napier.

"Ben Block," says Tom Dibdin, "was a veteran of naval renown." The same may be said of Sir Charles Napier; but Sir Charles Napier has this advantage over Ben Block—that he got into Parliament, and has a name as familiar in St Stephen's as on the quarter-deck.

Sir Charles Napier has good blood in his veins. He is a descendant of the inventor of Logarithms; was born on the 6th of March, 1786; entered the navy at the age of thirteen; was a post-captain at twenty-three, and in 1815, when the Euryalus, which he commanded, was paid off, was made a C.B. In 1829, he went to sea again, in the command of the Galatea—of the seedy, dirty, appearance of which naval men still talk. In 1830, Sir Charles took command of the fleet of Don Pedro, and captured the fleet of Don Miguel, off St Vincent, and thus helped to establish that precious Spanish government which is a scandal to our age. In the Syrian war, in 1840, Napier was commodore under Sir Robert Stopford, who commanded in the Mediterranean. Here he did considerable service. The landing

at D'Journie, the capture of Beyrout and Sidon, and the bombardment of Acre, were all owing to his instrumentality; and at Alexandria he astonished the liberating squadron by running in under a flag of truce, and concluding a convention with Mehemet Ali, out of his own head, which, in spite of its irregularity, was confirmed by the authorities at home. He returned to England full of popularity, and was brought into Parliament as member for Marylebone. He had before that time unsuccessfully contested Portsmouth and Greenwich. He took the command of the Mediterranean fleet, and retired from Parliament. The Russian war broke out. He went up the Baltic, and did nothing. The men of Southwark thought he was badly used, and sent him into Parliament.

The author of Singleton Fontenoy gives us a graphic sketch of Sir Charles as a sailor. Singleton is off Beyrout, and is sent on board a very dirty ship for orders. "Singleton, having copied the order, went on deck and ordered his boat to be called along-side. While waiting for it he saw a figure emerge from the cabin under the poop. There was a sensation on deck, and my hero perceived at once that the figure was that of a Great Man. He was dressed in a rather seedy uniform, and had an awkward stoop. His face was eccentric, but expressed power. He crossed his hands behind his back, and began to pace the deck with a gait that was as remarkable as everything else about him. It was Benbow with a dash of Garibaldi." Sir

Charles also has painted a portrait of himself, but in a more flattering style. In 1851 he collected and republished all the letters he had sent to the "*Times*," the "*Sun*," and other newspapers, under the title of "The Navy, its Past and Present State." It is hardly possible to conceive anything more vain-glorious than Sir Charles's assertions relative to himself. A few paragraphs taken at random will suffice. "Had I not displayed energy and boldness, the probability is that this country would have been involved in war and our foreign policy overthrown." "I dethroned Don Miguel. Had the battle of Cape St Vincent been lost, Don Miguel would have been on the throne of Portugal, the dynasty of Louis Philippe shaken to its centre, and most probably Lord Grey's administration." "I upset the Grand Prince of Lebanon, the ally of Mehemet Ali, defeated Mehemet's son, and drove his troops out of the mountain." "My services are unsurpassed by those of any admiral on the list—I think I may say, without fear of contradiction, that they have had more influence on the state of Europe than those of any other officer in the navy." "The battle of Cape St Vincent changed the dynasty, as well as the whole political face of Europe." But for him, Sir Charles assures us, "the Syrian expedition would have failed, Acre would not have been attacked, war with France would have been inevitable, our policy overthrown, and with it the Melbourne Administration." Such is the gallant admiral's modest assurance!

Some people call Sir Charles the modern Bombastes. He reminds me of a humbler character, one Thomas Codd. The reader asks who was the last-named gentleman? I will endeavour to answer that question. There lived, many years ago, in a certain city in the south of Ireland, an odd personage whose real name was a mystery, but who was popularly known by the name of Tom Codd. Now, like Sir Charles, he believed that all the great events that had taken place in Europe during his own time were owing to him. He was consulted by every statesman in Europe. From him the Duke of Wellington derived the plans of his most successful campaigns. It was his advice that prevailed in the councils of Europe. The wags of the city in question encouraged the poor man in his delusions to such a pitch that he verily believed the world could not go on without him. He preserved, says the writer from whom I take my account, his delusions to the last moment of his life, and he died in the full belief that he was the wisest and most influential man of his age. In naval matters, to compare great things with small, Sir Charles is, I fear, another Tom Codd.

Sir C. Napier is a capital illustration of the truth of the old adage, "Second thoughts are best!" Southwark elected him at the bidding of the publicans' paper, and because Southwark deemed he had a grievance. It is to the credit of Southwark that it should thus sympathize with what it deems the victim of a wrong;

but it would be to the credit of the Southwark collective brains if they recollected that impulse is by no means a safe rule of action. A wider knowledge of human nature should have taught Southwark that the man who is eternally boasting his own merits has but few merits; and that the man who wails his wrongs on the house-top generally has few wrongs to be redressed. It is true, on their own merits modest men are dumb. It is true that the woman who comes to you in the street, with an expression of abject misery in her face, with three children in her arms, whom she pinches all the while, and with a tale of villany on the part of a monster of a husband, who has left her all forlorn—is a female of questionable repute, and has hired the children at a moderate sum per day; it is true that if, in your morning walks, you give a cripple as you deem him something for charity, in the evening the impostor, over a jollier supper than your limited means will enable you to procure yourself, will be laughing at you as a precious flat. The public is constantly imposed on. It is often giddy and thoughtless as a child. It is the loudest rant the ten-pound householder or otherwise will most rapturously endorse. It is only education and intelligence that can teach men to detect the cloven foot under the mask of the popular tribune.

Look at Sir Charles; what has he done that he should take the vacant place of Sir W. Molesworth? Sir W. Molesworth—no one can deny it—was a states-

man; Sir Charles is nothing of the kind. He is a sailor in search of promotion. Not engaged in his profession, he had a seat in Parliament. Immediately professional advancement was offered him, his seat in Parliament was resigned. A war breaks out; amidst a wonderful flourish of trumpets Sir Charles is despatched to the Baltic; the Reform Club gives a dinner to the naval hero, who declares over his cups that he will either be at St Petersburg, or in a place that shall be nameless, in a month. The time passes, and Sir Charles is neither in one place nor the other; the nation strains itself to listen, but no sound of victory is borne to us over the tideless waters of the Baltic, and at length Sir Charles returns home—Sir James Graham would not let him fight the Russians, and Sir Charles hauls down his flag, and tells us he is an injured man. Sir Charles is lifted into Parliament, to have his revenge and impeach Sir James; but the House listens, laughs when the old admiral begins swearing, and finally is counted out. Oh what a falling off is there—what a lame and impotent conclusion! Sir Charles tells us he had a bad crew: it is a bad workman that quarrels with his tools. I question whether the infamous press-gang gave Nelson a better lot. That fleet that lay as summer in the Baltic,

> "Idle as a painted ship,
> Upon a painted ocean,"

was got together with some difficulty, cost the nation some money, and was expected to do something. Lord

John Russell, it seems, on one occasion intimated that Sir Charles evinced a want of discretion. Certainly this was not the case as regards the Baltic campaign. An excessive discretion is a little out of place in war. An excessively discreet man would not go to war at all—would take to farming or shop-keeping rather than become a warrior, and go in for glory and cannon-balls. Sir Charles—if the Sir Charles of old—would have won, by this time, either a peerage or Westminster Abbey. Sir Charles had more valour, we fancy, in his youth.

We pass on to other days: to Nelson expecting every man to do his duty; to Blake leaving politics to the Parliament, and telling the seaman, "It is not our business to mind state affairs, but to keep foreigners from fooling us!" In these days of magnificent promises and puny performances—when our most formidable sea-captains are only formidable with their pens, when their greatest achievement is to keep a fleet out of harm's way, when the finest fleet the world ever saw sails upon the Baltic as if it were so many yachts on a pleasure trip—it is well to look back to the time when English ships were not afraid of stone walls; when the Dutch were driven from the sea—when Spain, and France, and Italy trembled at the sight of the red cross of the Commonwealth—when Algerine pirates, of bloody lives and natures, freely gave up Christian captives—when, as a writer of the time expresses it, "England was everywhere held in

terror and honour!" The review will measure the exact difference between a Blake and a Napier; it will do more—it will indicate, in one department of public life, a falling off piteous and sad indeed!

Sir Charles's popularity, we fear, is of an evanescent character. It was the war with Mehemet Ali that made Sir Charles popular. John Bull loves to have a finger in every pie. Sir Charles came victorious out of the affair, and we welcomed home the conquering hero, forgetful all the while that we had thus destroyed what promised to have been a rising empire, and which, taking the place of Turkish weakness and venality, would have been in time a natural barrier to Russia in the East, and which would have saved us a world of trouble, already endured or about to come.

The old school of sailors finds an admirable representative in Sir Charles. Young fellows who went to sea at an early age, from schools in which they learned nothing or next to nothing, during our fighting days were in great demand, and did the state good service. They are in these days of education and competition in the civil service very rare; but of the old school it may be remembered that the first gentleman of the age, as his toadies called him—that poor bloated, dissipated prince, at whom we are all so ready to throw stones—while deeply engaged in solving the question as to the cut and colour of the garments of naval officers, gave up the attempt in despair, exclaiming, with an

oath, that dress them how you will, it is impossible to make them look like gentlemen. Well, these men never turned out great statesmen; even the gallant Nelson did not shine when he exchanged his proper business for diplomacy, and considerations of national policy. Jack ashore is proverbially easily duped; and is much given to play the fool. But, unfortunately, an admiral, like a lawyer, must have a place in Parliament. Unless he has one he has little chance of promotion; and now-a-days, as the liberal is the winning side, the number of adherents to popular principles is encouraging or alarming according to the point of view.

Sir Charles is a rough, jolly, free-and-easy old gentleman. He will shake hands with his sailors; he will rush into a peace meeting, as I have seen him do at Edinburgh, and make a good fight on behalf of a standing army and navy; he will stick to his own opinion, however unpopular, and will, in very plain language, bid you be —— if you do n't like it. He is very honest, considering that he represents a popular borough. It is true, on one occasion he did preside at a Sunday School meeting (the dissenters are strong in Southwark), but he boldly voted against the bill for the repeal of the Paper Duty, instead of, like the majority of M.P.s on that occasion, sending up the bill with a small majority as a hint to the Lords to throw it out. Sir Charles Napier does not act in that way. You never catch him at anything sneaking or

underhand. If he is in error he will frankly confess it. He candidly tells us he is ashamed of that part he took in the Syrian war. But, after all, honesty, and bluntness, and dash do not constitute a statesman. Other qualities are requisite. To these Sir Charles lays no claim. I fear Sir Charles is indebted, after all, for his public position, such as it is, chiefly to his own efforts to secure employment and place, by his constant attacks on Government, and by his obstinate proclamation of his merits. That he will pass away and be forgotten—that he will leave no impress on his age—that he will never rise to the rank of statesman, is very clear. Indeed, he makes no impression as he talks. No one listens to his speeches; they are all on the same subject, in almost the same words, and are all set to the same tune. There is nothing like leather, is the one unvaried cry; and, to judge from appearance, it really matters little to the gallant admiral whether men listen or not; whether they approve or condemn. There he stands drawling away, on the same seat in the gangway as Mr. Horsman, just below the Manchester party. M.P.s study parliamentary reports, get up and go out, find their way into the lobby or the smoking-rooms, but Sir Charles is not discouraged, and will have his say—

> "He is an ancient mariner,
> And he stoppeth one of three,"

says Coleridge. The Ancient Mariner of the House of Commons is not so fortunate, I question if he

gains the attention of one of thirty. Lord Clarence Paget is obliged to listen and reply, but no one else does. On the whole Sir Charles belongs to the past. He was born in fighting times, and bred to fighting. He has harped on one string till he has fallen a little behind his age. Now the times are altered; the old days are gone, the old ideas exploded, the old watchwords lost; and, like the bold Sir Bedivere, Sir Charles may exclaim—

> "And I, the last, go forth companionless,
> And the days darken round me, and the years,
> Amongst new men, strange faces, other minds."

## XII.

# SIR BULWER LYTTON.

WHAT wonders can be wrought by time, and patience, and energy! Like faith, they can remove mountains. In what walk of life has not Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton succeeded? who writes better novels? who has published more popular poems? who has penned smarter essays, or delivered more eloquent speeches? Without being a genius, by steady industry he has outstripped genius itself. It is true his position has been very favourable to success. He has never been a poor author. He has always been able to dine his critics. From the first he has mixed in what is called good society, and such as he never toil for fame in vain. There are some people who maintain that virtue is always rewarded, even in this life. Be that as it may, a gentleman of talent, and learning, and wealth, can never fail as politician or writer. The late Mr Henry Drummond, who abused everybody and everything, whose speeches always pointed in one

direction, while his votes went in another, was a success, as wit and statesman, because he was a partner in the banking-house in Charing-cross. For the same reason Sam Rogers got the public to buy so many editions of his "Pleasures of Memory." For the same reason, going back still further, were the verses of the Hon. William Robert Spencer—now rescued from oblivion merely by his being pilloried in the rejected addresses—in demand. We may go back still further. Swift's song, by a person of quality, indicates how, even in the Augustan age, the position of the writer was a very important consideration. But the subject of this sketch has done more than merely achieve the success always achieved by his class. His pluck, and perseverance, and brilliant qualities, would have made him a marked man had he been born in a garret, in a kitchen bred. We like to sympathise with success, especially when that success is won by one of the "upper ten thousand." A good man struggling with adversity may be a sight dear to the gods, but certainly not to the British public. That august body is apt to vote such a one a bore, and infinitely prefers the contemplation of a good man residing on his own unencumbered estate, and well endowed with this world's goods.

It is the night of a great debate. The men out of office are trying to drive out the men who are in; and everything betokens that a crisis is at hand. The whippers-in in the lobby are counting up their men;

the telegraph boys are hard at work; the Irish patriots have had things made pleasant, and popular M.P.s are quietly being sold; a few fierce patriots from Finsbury or Marylebone are gazing wildly at the gas and the door-keepers, while treachery is being done before their very eyes. The strangers in the gallery are vastly excited, and wonder how it is the leading characters should look as weary as actors on any other stage. It is early yet, and the House is very full. The first speech of the adjourned debate has scarce commenced when a tall, ghostly figure glides on to the Opposition bench, and places himself by the side of Mr Disraeli—nearest to the strangers' gallery. His eye glistens like that of the ancient mariner, and his hand is almost as skinny. All the flesh on his face seems to have run into hair; and his aquiline nose is as much a feature as was that of *the* Duke, or as is that of my Lord Brougham. He stoops forward, places his elbow on his side, makes an ear-trumpet of his hand, and turns his face to the speaker for the time being, as if unwilling to lose a single word. Perhaps he may take a note or two; rejoice, if he does, for that is a sure sign that he will speak next; and, if he does, you will have, indeed, a treat. As a dramatist, the man before you has won fitting fame; as a novelist, the world is familiar with his name. The voice of woman, quivering with emotion, has sung his choicest songs. The hard man of the world, the scholar in his cloister, the idler in Belgravian

saloons, have alike to be grateful to him for many hours of real joy; and therefore is it that not in vain does the author of "The Caxtons," and "My Novel," and "The Pilgrim of the Rhine," rise to catch the Speaker's eye. Sir Bulwer Lytton does not often address the House; when he does, his speeches are carefully prepared, and have the questionable reputation of reading well. He is artificial throughout. His voice, which is weak, is studiously modulated; his action, which is exuberant, is the same; his moustache, and dress, and deportment have an equally elaborate air. Though a wealthy baronet and a leading statesman, there is something of the author of "Pelham" hangs about him; yet, all that art and knowledge can do for him he has received. If reciting an essay were debating, Sir Bulwer Lytton would achieve no mean place in the annals of parliamentary eloquence; but he lacks the true secret of oratorical success—the genius for speaking, which nothing can buy—which no art can give, no industry secure—for the absence of which nothing can compensate—and the presence of which makes low-born, half-educated men principalities and powers. You see at once that the orator is on stilts; but he has a name, his composition is perfect, and he is, besides, immensely rich; so cheer after cheer greets him as he delivers, one after another, his well-prepared thrusts. Vivian Gray tells us—"In this country, to achieve distinction, a man must have a genius, or a million, or blood." Sir

Bulwer is favoured by the gods, and has all three, and now the tall and still handsome baronet would win yet another triumph—he would be a statesman as well as a novelist—he would act a part in history as well as imagine one—he would live in Downing-street as well as in Paternoster-row.

Sir Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer Lytton was born at Heydon Hall, Norfolk, in 1805, and was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained the Chancellor's prize medal for the best English poem. He sat for St Ives in 1831, and for Lincoln from 1832 to 1841, and was then supposed to be an advanced Liberal, and eager for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, on which question he founded an annual motion, and which, on one occasion, it is supposed he would have carried, as there was a large majority in his favour, but Mr Spring Rice appealed to him, and the motion was consequently withdrawn. At that time, also, he was in favour of the ballot, but now a large landowner, and seeing its utter inefficacy in France and America, he can no longer defend that theory. Altogether, he has very much altered his opinions, in common, I believe, with the rest of the British public, since he first started in life as a public man, and edited that respectable but long-defunct publication, the *Monthly Chronicle*. He now concurs with the general policy espoused by Lord Derby—would readjust the income-tax and mitigate on malt and tea. Yet the Whigs made Sir Bulwer a baronet. I am told

Sir Bulwer's maiden speech was by no means over-effective; but Sir Bulwer is a man not easily daunted, and he tried again. He obtained a committee to inquire into the laws affecting the drama, and introduced and carried a bill to grant stage copyrights to written dramas. One of his best speeches was that for the immediate emancipation of the West Indian slaves. O'Connell described it as one of the most vigorous efforts of impassioned reasoning he had ever heard in that House, and the speech was printed at the request and expense of the delegates from the societies in favour of immediate emancipation. Some of his political pamphlets, especially one called the "Crisis," have been very effective. On Lord Melbourne's resumption of the reins of power, it led to the offer of a place as one of the Lords of the Admiralty, an offer which Sir Bulwer very wisely declined. Of the "Letters to John Bull" I can only add that they plead for protection, and that the cause was already lost ere the baronet ventured into the field. On this question, however, he was consistent, as, so early as 1839, we find him resisting the repeal of the Corn Laws; and when he returned to public life, the old bonds of party had been in some degree broken up. He pronounced himself in favour of a fair trial to Lord Derby's Government, and, shortly after his return to Parliament, delivered his sentiments to this effect in a speech applauded by Disraeli as one of the most masterly ever given to the House. He spoke again once in the ses-

sion of 1853, upon his own motion against the enactment of the income-tax on its former footing; and when the Aberdeen Administration drifted into war, and broke down beneath the unaccustomed load, more than once was the voice of the baronet heard uttering what all England thought and felt. In 1858 the member for Hertfordshire — for in 1852 Sir Bulwer achieved that honour — became Secretary for the Colonies, and retained that office till the Derby administration fell, owing to the laudable desire of Lords Palmerston and Russell to present the people of England with a full and efficient measure of Parliamentary Reform. Altogether, the literary baronet is a great catch for the county party; with an intellect equal to that of Disraeli, and a name how much more English and racy of the soil!

As an orator, he carries us back to old times. The last time I heard Sir Bulwer Lytton reminded me of the last time I heard Macaulay. In more senses than one they resembled each other. They both laboured under physical disadvantages; they were both prepared speakers rather than debaters; and they both sustained similar relations to their party. It is the fashion of the baronet—as it was of the peer—to speak early in the evening; and what a rush was there to hear them! how the House filled! how the gallery opposite the Speaker filled! how keen was the enjoyment of the audience, and how sincere and enthusiastic the applause! The occasion to which I more particu-

larly allude was the adjourned debate on the second reading of the Reform Bill. Sir Bulwer Lytton spoke for nearly two hours, and certainly never did the hon. baronet make a more effective speech. Unfortunately he is very deaf, and, as he cannot tell when he is audible or not, at times he elevates his voice—which is very clear and shrill—and at times he drops it so much as to be utterly inaudible; and then he has such vehement and forcible gesticulation, as frequently to excite the apprehension quite as much as the admiration of the hearer. His spare, wiry, weird appearance; his thin outstretched arms; his figure, one moment thrown back to the imminent danger of the spine, and anon reaching as far as possible forward, in an opposite direction, seems scarcely English, and one feels as if witnessing the feats of some foreign professor of legerdemain, who has made the round of the principal Courts of Europe, and has condescended, for pecuniary reasons, to abide awhile in the more aristocratic regions of the metropolis. But this feeling soon vanishes as the accomplished rhetorician proceeds to invest even the common-places of party with an original and classic air. One great merit Sir Bulwer Lytton has, and that is, he is never dull. As a rule, M.P.s are dreadfully dull, Dulness—if I may judge by what I hear and see every day, especially in the Church and in the Senate-house—is much appreciated by the English public. We seem quietly to assume that a dull man is never either a rogue or a fool. In vain we

take the taxes off knowledge, and teach people to read and write:

> "Still her old empire to restore she tries,
> For, born a goddess, Dulness never dies."

One word as to Sir Bulwer Lytton's Parliamentary position. The House of Commons every day becomes a more plebeian assembly. One cannot be surprised at this, for its saving virtue is, that it is the People's House (in reality, it is not what it is in theory); and, of course, every day we are told that it is less and less an assembly of orators. This is a very old complaint; Wilberforce made it in 1809, when Canning and Brougham were in the House. As soon as the Reformed Parliament met, all the rejected M.P.s and Anti-Reformers said the same. The truth is, the House meets for business, and the leaders and most successful men talk about business, and M.P.s, no matter how distinguished they may be for their talents, who forget this and seek to shine by mere eloquence, must assuredly fail. Now, Sir Bulwer Lytton belongs to the old school, and does the oratorical on the grand scale, while Disraeli and Lord Palmerston speak for power, and are indifferent as to display. Sir Bulwer seems to consider himself merely "as a living apparition, sent to be a moment's ornament;" and hence it is that he has never taken first rank in an assembly which is jealous as a mistress of a divided homage. The grand field-nights are merely

oratorical exercises; the real business of the country is carried on in a much less pretentious manner. I almost wonder how M.P.s can sit out such occasions. They know their mockery. Excuses may be made for verdant and enthusiastic strangers in the gallery. Speaking rarely affects voting; party contests never.

## XIII.

## THE RT. HON. SIDNEY HERBERT.

As regards ourselves, perhaps the most responsible post in the ministry is the Secretary of the War Department. No one supposes that England is in any danger of invasion—no one supposes for a moment that a successful invasion is possible; but the moral influence of a nation greatly depends upon its display of physical power. If you travel in France, or converse with Germans, or, indeed, with almost any class of foreigners, they will tell you that England has seen her best days; that she does not take the high position among the nations of the earth she once assumed; that, in short, we are used up, and only fit to play second fiddle to France. If we ask for proof of this monstrous assertion we are referred to the Crimean war, but our unfriendly critics forget that if, at the first, our official system broke down—that if our brave men were badly officered—that if we lost them by thousands—that, if our stores, and plans, and generals

proved old and useless—public opinion had been aroused—efforts, such as only England can make, were made, and that we were in a condition to carry on a successful struggle, just as France, exhausted and weary, was but too glad to have recourse to peace. Let Europe see that our army is in a thoroughly effective state, and Old England will be held in as much honour, and her alliance as earnestly desired, and her displeasure as deeply dreaded, as in the days of Nelson, or Wellington, or the other mighty heroes of the past. But, in order that this may be the case, we need a man at the head of the war department in the House of Commons who is above that fear of giving offence in high quarters which bringeth a snare—a man who thoroughly understands the faults of the present condition of the army—who is desirous to remove them, and who is determined that the English army shall be as effective as it is costly. Is Mr Herbert the man for this? That is a question which the future alone can decide. What we know of him is to his credit. In a small way he has done the State good service. He has been "faithful over a few things." For many a useful reform, for many an extra comfort, the English soldier has to thank him. When out of office he vigorously supported those who advocated a better education of officers, and especially of those for the staff. Besides, he has dared to attack the purchase system—that most monstrous of all abuses. A War Minister of determined will, backed by public opinion, might

make the English army the most perfect military machine in the world: but to do this he must be prepared to encounter the pains and enmities of the Upper Ten Thousand. He must be prepared to make sacrifices of the severest character: his self-reliance would be put to a very terrible trial, and in Parliament he would be worried almost to death. Even at the Horse Guards —where, from the position of the present Commander-in-Chief, he might naturally look for sympathy and aid, he would receive nothing but discouragement. In the debate which took place very recently in the House of Lords, his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief did not conceal his bias in favour of the present system, and indeed he has often confessed his strong reluctance to undertake the responsibility of selecting deserving officers, and promoting them over the heads of the wealthy but less deserving. In Spenser's Fairy Queen we read of a philosopher who argues with a giant; the giant has an iron mace and knocks him down. Will Mr Sidney Herbert submit thus to be knocked down? The attempt undoubtedly will be made, if he seeks to do his duty to the army, his country, or his Queen.

Mr Herbert is one of the governing classes. The right honourable gentleman, born in 1810, is son of the eleventh Earl of Pembroke by his second wife, the only daughter of Count Woronzow, and is half-brother and heir-presumptive to the present earl. I am particular in giving Mr Herbert's genealogy, be-

cause it was a favourite cry of the beery politicians of London that Odessa was spared because Sidney Herbert's wife was a Russian princess. Small politicians made considerable capital out of the charge, and one daily paper—the intelligent reader can guess which—laid considerable stress upon the fact. The real truth is, that in 1846 Sidney Herbert married a daughter of Major-General A'Court, a lady well known for a life of untiring activity and energy in the walks of philanthropy more especially fitted for female coöperation and aid.

It is said a change of blood improves the breed. The nobles of Spain intermarry and become intellectually and physically weak. The French occupation of Hamburg is said much to have aided in the production of a better race of citizens in that pleasant and thriving town. Speaking of the celebrated Irish Brigade, Lord Cloncurry tells us in his Memoirs, "There could not be a better example of crossing blood than was afforded by these gentlemen. They were generally the offspring of Irish fathers and French mothers, and were the finest models of men I ever recollect to have seen." The fact that the true-born Englishman has in his veins the blood of almost every country under heaven, may account for the beauty and energy of which we boast, and which even rival nations reluctantly confess. I believe there is nothing like the infusion into an English family of a little genuine northern blood. Sidney Herbert is emphatically a case in point. There is un-

doubtedly something very fine and vigorous about his personal appearance. He is the very model of the modern English gentleman;—not the port-wine drinking, anti-French, Church-and-King man of the last generation, under whom the nation was going headlong to the devil, but of a man born in affluence, whom Christianity has made decent, and whose intellectual and bodily powers have been strengthened and matured by the habits of a life. At the same time, he exhibits all the disadvantages of having been brought up in a class and accustomed to look at everything in a distorted light. Such men are like men coming out of a cave, and it is long before they discern things as they really are. Hence, as in the case of Lord Stanley, half their time is devoted to unlearning the preposterous notions acquired at home, or at school, or college. The parliamentary career of Mr Herbert illustrates this. He began life in 1832 as a Conservative. The first occasion of his taking part in a debate in Parliament was on the 20th of June, 1834, upon a motion for the second reading of a bill for the admission of Dissenters to the Universities. Mr Estcourt, the predecessor of Mr Gladstone in the representation of the University of Oxford, having moved as an amendment that the bill be read a second time that day six months, he was seconded by Mr Sidney Herbert, who opposed the measure on the ground that, in these times of dissension of every species, the admission of Dissenters to the Universities would be nothing less than opening these

institutions to conflicting opinions, and making them the arena of religious animosity!!! Again, up to the year 1841, Mr Herbert's opinions on the principle which should guide us in our commercial intercourse with the nations were decidedly protectionist. He opposed the motion of the then Whig government, to substitute for the sliding scale an eight-shilling fixed duty on the imports of corn, as well as Lord John Russell's proposal for the reduction of the duties on foreign sugar; but when Peel turned round, Sidney Herbert, who had been successively Secretary to the Admiralty and Secretary at War, with a seat in the Cabinet, turned round with him; and in a debate in 1846, on the motion of Sir Robert Peel for a committee of the whole House upon the customs and corn importation acts—having been taunted by the Earl of March with an abandonment of his oft-expressed convictions, the right honourable gentleman confessed that, after the most mature deliberation, he had been compelled to take the course he had. Of course Mr Herbert's constituency was protectionist to the backbone all the same; and when a general election came in 1847, an attempt was made to displace him in the representation of the county. Mr Herbert's influence in Wiltshire is enormous; and Wiltshire, in the person of its representative, decided in favour of Free Trade. Then came the Crimean war, when one statesman after another became bankrupt. The Duke of Newcastle became the scapegoat, and was sent forth, like the

goat in Mr Robert's picture, into the desert, bearing the sins of the Ministry. In the unpopularity of that period Sidney Herbert had his share; nor was his unpopularity undeserved. It is clear that he relied upon the misstatements of the officials, and contended that our army was in a prosperous condition, when in fact it was the reverse; that he, and those who acted with him, never thought we should have had a real war; and that, when war actually broke out, they were not prepared to carry it on with vigour, or to punish Russia as she deserved. This is another disadvantage Sidney Herbert experienced on account of his birth and breeding—he had lived in an ideal world—he had never stood face to face with the English nation. Had he lived and toiled as the people live and toil, his sight would have been clearer and his blundering less. I am aware that the people is not a profoundly learned or acutely logical body; but they had the idea, and in this they were right, that Turkey was wronged—that Russia was an aggressive power, and they believed that as Russia had been the mainstay of despotism on the continent, that a war that would have crippled Russia would have aided the cause of freedom and of man all over Europe. Under such an idea alone was war justifiable. Our statesmen entered on it with no such idea, and by large classes the war cry was reëchoed for even still less worthy ends—as a means of plunder after inglorious years of inactivity, half-pay, and peace. The war came, and the people grew mad as

the *Times* told them what Sidney Herbert and the Government denied. Mr Roebuck's motion was carried, and down went the Aberdeen Cabinet like a ship at sea. We remember well the night of the debate. Generally, when the tellers come up to announce the result, they are cheered by the winning party as only Englishmen can cheer. For a wonder, on that occasion not a cheer was heard! There was silence, amazement, wonder everywhere; and then a short derisive laugh, as they saw the vaunted coalition melt into thin air. They did well to be silent and amazed. Thoughtful men were already asking—of this victory who was to reap the fruits? Were the Derbyites again to be placed in power? or was the Great Britain of the nineteenth century, the mother of colonies, compared with which those of imperial Rome were pigmies —the asylum of liberty denied elsewhere, to be the appanage of the House of Bedford; or was there to be but a shuffle of the cards—Palmerston premier, in the place of Lord Aberdeen; Lord Panmure in the room of the Duke of Newcastle; Fred. Peel, *vice* Sidney Herbert? were the old faces again to come back to us? was the old fearful system of administration again to be continued? was the old hideous weight of the aristocracy again, like a nightmare, to press upon the land? was there to be no hope of a better state of things? Well, there was then silence, for who was there to cheer? Lord John Russell ignominiously escaped from the sinking ship. Sidney Herbert and

his colleagues at any rate bravely stuck to their posts. Sidney Herbert was driven from office, that Mr Frederick Peel might fill his vacant place. We doubt whether the nation gained anything by the change.

A man who is born to enormous wealth, like Sidney Herbert, owes much to society. A landlord who knows nothing of his property but to draw his rents from it—who merely comes into the country to hunt, and then spends an idle and vicious career in the capitals of Europe, is the most dangerous possible character; and in times of fierce political excitement would precipitate anarchy and revolution. But the landed class have grown philanthropic. Their aim is to build churches, to form schools, to caution their labourers against beer-shops, to send out distressed needlewomen to Australia, to turn ragged boys into decent and industrious shoeblacks, and to learn St Giles the value of a cheap bath and a clean shirt. Of this class of philanthropists Lord Shaftesbury may be placed at the head; next, perhaps, is Sidney Herbert. He has done as much, perhaps, as could be done, in mitigating the hardships of the British poor, and while in office, it must be remembered that he did much for the improvement of the soldier's condition, and that it was he who broke through routine, despised the clamour of the religious press as to infecting the army with Puseyism, and suffered Florence Nightingale and her noble company to proceed on their mission of mercy and love.

But I have not yet pointed him out to you. You will see him seated side by side with Palmerston and Russell and his colleagues, on the right hand of the Speaker. It is the time appointed for private business. Military men are numerous in the House, and as every man of them has his own peculiar views, which he is anxious to see put in practice, Mr Herbert has enough to do to answer the numerous interrogatories addressed to him on all sides. Look at him on his legs. What a contrast to General Peel, or Mr Frederick Peel, or Sir Joshua Ramsden, and other amiable mediocrities, his predecessors! What strength seems to lie in his well-formed and manly figure! How full is his face of power, and sharpness, and determination! How clearly and pleasantly he speaks! In debate, how ready and practical he is! What a clear ringing voice he has! He may not be a great orator, but he is certainly a useful and able man.

Yet one must not be too much prepossessed in favour of Mr Sidney Herbert. His appointment of General Grey was a scandal of the most atrocious order, and worthy of the worst days of military mismanagement. England needs a good army, and to that it is essential that promotion should go, not by favour, but by merit. Yet in the case of General Grey this principle was completely set aside. The press found fault, and Mr Herbert was determined to stand by his order. He was not going to sacrifice a man because the press insisted on the promotion of some veteran warrior in

preference to the claims of a carpet knight; of course the Upper Ten Thousand will consider that Mr Herbert acted rightly, but plain people must have a very different opinion. Especially when they feel that Mr Herbert is the responsible head of the army, not merely from his parliamentary position, but as a matter of fact.

## XIV.

## SIR JOHN PAKINGTON, M.P.

A TALE is told of an Eastern potentate, who, amongst the other lions of London, visited the House of Commons. The distinguished foreigner was delighted with everything he saw; the occupants of the Treasury benches, the Speaker, the Mace, the Serjeant-at-Arms, the clerks at the table, the reporters in the gallery, small and incommodious, and the ladies very properly in another gallery, smaller and more incommodious still; all were so fortunate as to obtain his warm approval. His attention was directed to gentlemen sitting opposite the Treasury benches. He asked who they were; the reply was, that they were Her Majesty's Opposition. The answer puzzled him greatly, and when he did understand it, when it was explained that those gentlemen sat there to oppose everything Her Majesty's government said and did—to find fault with it, whether it stood still or moved on, he scarce knew whether most to admire the audacity that could

suggest, or the lenity that could pardon, such a course. "Her Majesty's Opposition, indeed!" exclaimed the astonished spectator. "By Allah! in my country we should have off their heads in a week." Even in civilised Europe an opposition exists only by perilling its liberty. It is only in England it is safe. In times of excitement, the opposition is a safety valve—in times of weakness, a source of confusion—in times like the present, principally a means of doubling the parliamentary session and reports. A clear, definite policy may receive a decided opposition, as it will insure a decided support. Free Trade, for instance, was a thing to which men might say Yes or No, as they could to Catholic Emancipation, the Reform Bill, or the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, or as they will say to measures which will be discussed when the people of this country awake from their sleep of political indifference and unbelief. But it is difficult to oppose a government without convictions; especially if the opposition comes from men in a similar category. In the main, both parties are agreed. Both have accepted Free Trade. Either would regale a hustings' mob with the cant phrases of "a glorious war," or "a safe and honourable peace." The fiery old thick-headed squires are gone, and the jolly old thick-headed opposition is gone with them. Sibthorpe was the *ultimus Romanorum*. One does not see why Sir John Pakington sits on one side of the House and Sir Charles Wood on the other. One can under-

stand Sir Harry Inglis, or Sir Charles Wetherell, or a late Duke of Newcastle. They would not move the ancient landmarks. They honestly believed that it was essential to the welfare of this country that Old Sarum and Gatton should be represented in Parliament, and that Manchester and Birmingham should not; they thought, that the way to get the Irish Roman Catholics to love them, was by insulting and persecuting the professors of that ancient faith—that, to keep men honest, they were to swear to what they did not believe, and that the country would go to the bad if the starving labourer was permitted to eat his untaxed bread. At the time of the Reform Bill agitation Sir Harry Inglis said, that if that bill were carried, then in ten years' time there would be no State Church, no House of Lords—nay, more—that even Royalty would be swept away. Now, all this seems very absurd to us, but it was honestly believed then by some of the Opposition, who went so far as to take their money out of the English funds and invest them in American stock. The Opposition, then, if not very enlightened, was at any rate clear. Now that it has become wiser, it is less of an opposition. As an instance, let us glance at Sir John Pakington's political career. Sir John Somerset Pakington, born in 1799, at Powick Court, Worcestershire, very much astonished the world by accepting, in 1852, the office of Secretary of State for the Colonies. Men had only conceived of him as a respectable member of the

country party and chairman of quarter sessions. Nominally a Conservative, necessity was laid upon him, and he was compelled to advance with the times. The party with which he acted has always opposed Free Trade, the Maynooth Grant, and the admission of Jews to Parliament; but in office—first as Colonial Secretary, and then as First Lord of the Admiralty—Sir John has accepted Free Trade, walked out of the House without voting on a Maynooth debate, and was an active party in admitting Baron Rothschild and Alderman Salomons to a seat in the House of Commons. We thus learn that Sir John, if a Conservative, is not an obstinate one; not of that type of Conservatism which the ever-to-be-lamented Arnold deprecated as the most revolutionary element in existence. From his attention to the subject of education—from his presence at the Social Science meetings—from his readiness to aid the philanthropic movements of the day—it is clear Sir John is a liberal, whatever be the name of the party of whom he is one of the chiefs. Still more as a practical administrator are we under national obligations to Sir John Pakington. At the beginning of 1859, or at the latter end of 1858, the country became alarmed at the state of the national defences. Sir John, who was then in office, turned his attention to the subject. Our navy was admitted to be woefully deficient; we were badly off both as regards ships and men. Sir John made an attempt to build the one and procure the other. If Sir John

Pakington fell into the usual error of exerting his influence as First Lord of the Admiralty in political matters; if he quarrelled with Captain Carnegie, because the latter would not fight for the Conservatives at Dover, he did but as other First Lords of the Admiralty have done before. No doubt there is monstrous abuse in the Admiralty. By means of its influence and expenditure the dockyards are little better than government boroughs. No doubt that in these places millions and millions of the people's money are wasted; Lord Clarence Paget has established this fact. A great statesman—a man of the first order—would have swept out this Augean stable. Sir John Pakington has failed to do so, and hence takes his place amongst statesmen of the second rank.

We hear much of the country party; Tennyson has painted the class. He describes a country squire as—

"A great broad-shouldered genial Englishman;
A lord of fat prize oxen and of sheep;
A raiser of huge melons and of pine;
A patron of some thirty charities;
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain;
A quarter sessions' chairman—abler none;
Fair-haired, and redder than a windy morn."

"Jolly companions are they every one," but they are not orators; and while they will vote, and spend money, and fight at elections for their party, they have no idea of being penned up all night in the House of Commons, breathing bad air and listening to bad speeches. Writing in 1828, of a government formed

on the basis of resistance to Roman Catholic claims, the late Sir Robert Peel wrote—"What must have been the inevitable fate of a government composed of Goulburn, Sir John Pechell, Wetherell, and myself? Supported by very warm friends no doubt; but those warm friends being prosperous country gentlemen, fox-hunters, &c. — most excellent men — who will attend one night, but who will not leave their favourite pursuits to sit up till two or three o'clock, fighting questions of detail—on which, however, a government must have a majority—we could not have stood creditably a fortnight." The description is still true, and hence it is that Sir John Pakington is made so much of. A real country gentleman so patriotic is a rarity; a country gentleman able to speak English as fluently and correctly as any lawyer in the House is a still greater rarity.

In the middle of the front Opposition bench you will see a gentleman seated, of the middle size, with a pale face, and rather a hooked nose. In his dress and general bearing, you gather indications of correctness and finish, rather than of greatness or genius. On one side of him is Mr Disraeli; on the other, it may be, is Sir Bulwer Lytton. What a contrast to each does Sir John Pakington present! Still, compared with the men with whom he is often matched, he rises vastly in your estimation. He is not so ludicrous as Sir Charles Wood, nor so distressingly fluent as Sir George Grey, nor is he so dreadfully dreary as Sir Cornewall Lewis,

nor so hard and austere as Mr Charles Gilpin, nor does he drawl so excruciatingly as Lord John Russell, nor exhibit so flippant an air as the ever-youthful Palmerston. Sir John is a respectable speaker, and all respectable speakers are alike. He does not use the thunderbolts of Jove. He does not "shake the arsenal and fulmine over Greece." He does not even attempt —like Burke—to clothe Conservatism in a philosophic form—much less has he the wit and classic grace of Canning; but then he has ever a good word for the clergy—wears always unexceptionable linen, always sports a good hat, has his thin gray hair well brushed, and delights in faultless boots. I should think he always pays his trades' people, attends punctually at the parish church, and, I should imagine, is a decorous husband, a pattern father of a family, and is regular in having the servants in to family prayers.

There will be no collection of his speeches after his decease. The student will not resort to them as models, either on account of their powerful logic or brilliant declamation. They will go the way of most speeches, and sleep in Hansard for ever; but Sir John is a useful man nevertheless. There are many lawyers who would make better speeches; but then they are not country gentlemen; and even if, as they do occasionally—like Mr Napier—shed tears, the common sense of the House rejects the idea of sincerity where lawyers are concerned; but Sir John Pakington is a country gentleman with a large estate. The family is an old

one, and a decent one, and his party thankfully use his services. He does not convince them; they do not want to be convinced—they are convinced already. He does not convince the Liberals; their minds are made up to vote against Sir John before he opens his mouth: but he gives his party a decent excuse for voting. It would scarce do to march into the lobby without a discussion; to give silent votes would be a confession of intellectual weakness for which the country party are not yet prepared; but Sir John can speak on any question for any length of time, and when, towards the end of a debate, he rises and repeats the objections which have entered his head, his friends feel that they have appeared to have discussed the measure long enough, and that it is time the division takes place; and the strangers in the gallery feel that there are two sides to every question, and that they are not the worse for hearing them.

## XV.

# THE LATE HENRY DRUMMOND.*

"To waive all considerations of personal friendship and esteem," wrote Edward Irving, in a preface to a volume of occasional discourses, "no one whom the religious stir and business of the last thirty years hath brought conspicuously before the Church, hath so strenuously served her best interests, through good and bad report, or doth so well deserve her thanks, as doth the man who brought forward, from their obscurity and persecutions, both Burckhardt and Wolff, and upheld their way against the sharp tongues of prudential and worldly-wise Christians; who laid the foundations of the Continental Society, and hath built it up in the frown and opposition of the religious world; who detected and dragged to light the false reports concerning the state of religion on the Continent, with which the Bible Society in its palmy times had closed the charitable ear of the Church; who has

* The late Henry Drummond was in every way a representative man, hence I have deemed it right to retain a sketch of him here.

stood forth as the friend and patron of every society which hath any show of favour for the Jews; and, finally, who hath taken us, poor, despised interpreters of prophecy, under your wing, and made the walls of your house like unto the ancient schools of the prophets."

The reader will scarce guess for whom this dedication was composed. Perhaps he will think the subject of it was some wealthy clergyman or zealous bishop for a wonder trespassing beyond conventional limits, and showing himself a man earnest in matters of religion. It will save some trouble if I declare at once the eulogy was addressed to no other than the gentleman whose name heads this sketch—Henry Drummond, M.P.,—a man whose plain mission seemed to be to teach that all is humbug under the sun. The Egyptians at their feasts placed a skeleton to remind them of their mortality. We are told the Sultan Saladin had the same message proclaimed to him day by day, lest, in the flattery of courtiers, and in a career of military successes, he should forget so terrible a truth. Drummond performed a similar duty in Parliament. In his eye we were all morally dead; all virtue was gone clean out of us. Under the mask of patriotism he saw the grovelling soul of the placeman; in the love of liberty, the desire of license; in the people, an untaught mass, the prey of charlatans and quacks. Drummond reminded you of the

"Gray and tooth-gapped man as lean as death,"

whom Tennyson describes in his "Vision of Sin," and like him, he poured out a strain so sad and atheistic you would fain hope it false. Yet Drummond was an angel of the Irvingite Church, not as the result of a sudden whim, but as the proper climax to a long professional religious career.

But I beg the reader's pardon for keeping him so long out of the House of Commons. Let us suppose it is a debate on any serious subject. The abolition of death punishments, for instance—a question embracing the whole range of subjects connected, not merely with the lives of wretched criminals, but with all the defences by which society would guard itself against crime. We will take the last debate on this subject as an illustration. Mr Ewart has of course defended his motion with his usual ability. Mr Hadfield, a Manchester attorney, but representative of Sheffield, with a querulous, unpleasant voice, like that of a man who deserves to be in a minority if he is not in one, has seconded Mr Ewart, and immediately there rises from the gangway—the first bench on the floor on the left—a tall, clerical-looking gentleman, who at once makes the House laugh. Listen to him:—"The proposition was for a Select Committee to inquire into the operation of the law imposing the punishment of death. Now he should have thought the operation of that law was simple enough" (hear, and a laugh). Again the hon. gentleman extracts another laugh on a subject at the first glance certainly not very facetious.

The speaker continues:—"But the hon. gentleman called upon them to abolish the punishment of death on the ground of its uncertainty. Now, what punishment could be more certain than that of death he could not conceive"—(hear, and a laugh)—and thus at any rate the amusement of the evening is heightened. Now on almost all subjects this eccentric M.P. thus spoke, invariably as much as possible in opposition to every one else.

In the memoirs of the Brothers Haldane, we read, in the early part of the present century, of the arrival at Geneva of a gentleman whose "pleasing manners and aristocratic bearing, finely-chiselled features and intellectual forehead, bespoke his breeding and intelligence; whilst in his acute and penetrating glance, wit, sarcasm, and the love of drollery, seemed to contend with earnestness, benevolence, and an ever-restless Athenian craving after novelty." To this young man, just entering into life, it seemed that all the world could offer was within his grasp. As the grandson of the first Lord Melville, the high offices of State were fairly within his reach. With wit and boundless wealth, what a life of pleasure, such as Alcibiades might have envied, was within his reach! yet, while other men were climbing up the steep hill of fame, or dimming their lustre in the search after gold—or following the phantom pleasure far over hill and dale, till weary and way-worn she left them in utter darkness and despair—Henry Drummond was drawing around him a

select circle to study the dark sayings of the prophets, and to gather from them the weapons with which to turn to folly the wisdom of these latter days. Three curious volumes in octavo, entitled "Dialogues on Prophecy," written by the host himself, and much subsequent confusion in the Christian Church, evinced that these bewildering conferences were not altogether without influence in their day. But one can't go on studying the prophets for ever. Englishmen especially cannot get rid of their inborn propensity to break away from cloudland into practical life. Not merely do such as he of "Locksley Hall," with strong hearts torn and bleeding with the bitter agony of a manly love wantonly trifled with, or basely betrayed, exclaim—

"I must nerve myself to action, lest I wither in despair;"

but all men, whatever be their inward sorrows, recognise the truth, not merely as a universal law of humanity, but as a blessed means of escape from entanglements of the heart, or difficulties of the head. Another reason may be urged—(the mighty master dead—the eloquent tongue, that, like the voice of a trumpet, terrified our Modern Babylon with the certain coming of a millennial day, silent in the grave—the brain become dust that had to contend, not merely with the wit and wisdom of the world, which in its higher light it would see to be folly, but with the keen and cruel enmities of the Church)—silence in the halls of the prophets, and they

"Scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,"

what was there to forbid Drummond laying down his spiritual pursuits and betaking himself to others more congenial with human weakness and the claims of actual life. Thackeray sings :—

> "Ho! pretty page with the dimpled chin
> That never has known the barber's shear,
> All your wish is woman to win,
> This is the way that boys begin,—
> Wait till you come to forty year."

By the light of years one reads things differently to what one does in one's earlier days; or if that be not the case possession cloys the appetite, and we find in change relief. Just as the elegant *roué* subsides into fat and matrimony, or the spendthrift becomes penurious, so Henry Drummond left the fathers for the senators, and forsook the school of the prophets that he might become one of the mob that fills St Stephen's with voices almost as obscure and unmeaning as those of prophecy itself. West Surrey contained the country-house of Henry Drummond; what more natural than that it should return him as its representative? West Surrey belongs to a few lords, and was not Drummond lordly by connection with wife and mother? In West Surrey at any rate such logic is not unpalatable, and accordingly in 1847 Henry Drummond, a country gentleman of a sanctimonious turn—a theologian and a banker—a wit, yet a member of the *haut ton*—became its M.P. The man who combined all these characteristics—who could tell a scandal with a relish one moment,

and the next plunge many a fathom deep into the millennial controversy; who could talk in the true bucolic vein to the Tyrrells and Newdegates, and at the same time could say a good thing, worthy to be told at the clubs with the last epigram of Moore or the newest sarcasm of Rogers; who could uphold the sacraments and yet abhor the Pope; who could abuse the Church and yet spurn Dissent—was not an ordinary man.

Austere and crotchety, elderly and cynical, Henry Drummond was an extraordinary man merely to look at. He was tall and thin, with an oval head, a calm, passionless face, and short, scant grey air. There was an air of the recluse about him. One would expect to find him at Oxford or Cambridge rather than in the House of Commons. Yet not only did you find him there, but he was a favourite with the House. When he spoke there was always a rush from the smoking-room and the lobbies. In the first place, he was what all Englishmen like—rich; in the second place, he had the good sense never to bore you, and never to be long; in the third place, he was often witty, and invariably crotchety and odd. There are several men who attempt wit in the House. Lord Palmerston does, but his is generally sheer flippancy, and would be insufferable in a man who was not on the pedestal, but had a position to make. Sibthorp did, but his was of an inferior character, yet an enlightened English constituency could return him, and will return his family for ever—at any rate, so long as they keep the estate.

One of the Lennoxes—the stout one, not the thin one that hands sherry cobblers to Mr Disraeli when he is doing the orator on an extensive scale—attempts to be jocose, but his is the tragic mirth of a gay man about town, and has the same effect on you as that of the celebrated peer of whom Tom Moore sang that when

> "The House looks unusually grave,
> You may always be sure that Lord Lauderdale's joking."

Then there is the wit of the cynic of the Dean Swift school, but slightly altered and improved, with all the improper passages omitted, with a dash of extra bitterness gathered from the fairest regions of theological controversy—scholarly and gentlemanly. That was the wit of Drummond, uttered in the mildest manner, and with the thinnest possible of voices, almost inaudible in the gallery, so that the House was kept in a state of the utmost soul-harrowing quiet and suspense, till he got to the end of a sentence, when it occurs to every one that Mr Drummond had been uncommonly funny, and the House relieved itself by a hearty laugh —a laugh generally heralded by a few preliminary explosions from the more impulsive members, as the orchestra tunes up previous to a grand overture, or as a few random shots may be heard ere rank and file on the battle-field may begin their murderous fire; and when you read the *Times* next morning you are not surprised to find that "laughter" is reported after most of Mr

Drummond's remarks. I cannot find that the debate gained much by Mr Drummond's speeches. I do not imagine he intended it should. His object appeared to be simply to amuse and mystify the House. He seemed to assume that the House had made up its mind how it should vote long before the discussion commenced, and therefore in a quiet, unostentatious way Mr Drummond merely uttered a few sentences and attained his object. I need scarcely observe then that he was an original; no other definition of him can be given. He was neither Whig, Tory, nor Radical. I believe the author of "Who is Who" would be puzzled to describe to what class the member for West Surrey belonged. In the early part of Disraeli's career, a pamphlet was published with the title "What is He?" I could imagine a pamphlet having such a title, with reference to Mr Drummond, would have a very fair sale among his constituents. In 1847 Mr Drummond walked over the course unopposed, yet I much question whether his constituents could have told what he was. Dodd tells me Mr Drummond was a Conservative; that he was a member of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Florence; that he founded the Professorship of Political Economy at Oxford—feeling, I suppose, his own deficiency in this respect; I learn also that he was a magistrate; and as he always sneered at the present age, I am not surprised to find that he was the president of one of the literary institutions (the Western) so peculiar to the present age. He

believed people cannot live without good beer, yet he only knew one house in Surrey where they can get it good. He said that the food of the people should be as free from taxation as the air they breathe, yet he derided the free traders. He was opposed to all measures for taxing one sect for the support of the clergy of another, yet he always wrote against the abolition of church rates. He believed in God's goodness, and yet rolled as a sweet morsel under his tongue—and would propound it unhesitatingly in the House of Commons, where, of all places, theological dogmas should have no leave to enter — the utter depravity of infants at their birth. He borrowed from Rome the idea of a Catholic and Universal Church, and then abused the Pope. All men are rogues, and therefore it is folly to expose honesty in politics or in the administration of state affairs. He thought so meanly of his constituents that he told them they do every day what the Czar did when he originated the late war. He was an author, yet he abominated the press. But time fails me, and I give up the task of attempting to chronicle the opinions of the eccentric member for West Surrey. All his speeches are strange—some are clever and some are new. Once or twice the *Times* was guilty of the folly of attempting to write him down; but in this country you cannot write down a statesman with an aristocratic connection and a good estate. Mr Drummond was more than the *Times* im-

agined, and hence its ridicule was thrown away. Mr Drummond was not a statesman in the common acceptation of that term. You could never fancy him, with a penitent air, tying up red tape, and doing the work of the Circumlocution-office. Still less was he a party man; for if he sat on one side of the House, he generally voted on the other, and his speech was no index to his vote. Nor was he a worshipper of public opinion, nor did he stand forth as its representative in the House. He was merely a country gentleman, cultivated into a paradox —at all times consistent in his aim at originality in politics and theology—with a tone of extravagance caught in the prophetic conferences of his earlier years; a man with a keen perception of the vanity of practical politics, and yet not strong enough to attain unto something purer and better.

## XVI.

## WILLIAM S. LINDSAY.

A GOOD man of business need not necessarily be a bad politician. Algernon Sidney, speaking of the Florentine republic, said "it was for a short time the most perfect republic that ever existed. In the morning they used to attend to their counting-houses, in the humble garb and manner of citizens. In the evening they used to attend in their places as legislators, with their *Gonfaloniere*, who was elected every three months, as their head; and at night, when necessary, eighty thousand men, at the sight of the war-fires on the hills, assembled in the vale of Arno to march against the foe." In England trade and commerce have been looked upon almost as ignoble; only a landed proprietor could be a true gentleman, and contained the raw material out of which might be formed the accomplished orator or the heaven-born statesman. This idea has been latterly somewhat rudely shattered by the severe logic of facts, but it is a fallacy which

exists still in a mild form, especially in agricultural districts. Hence is it that even in our time the regular red tapists are very much annoyed at a gigantic innovation introduced since Lord Palmerston has been in office. They are angry that a man of business should have been sent to Paris to negotiate a commercial treaty, and they were still more angry when an extensive ship-owner was reported to have gone to America to try and get better terms from the American government for our shipping than at present we are able to do. This complaint might be well founded if our distinguished and noble diplomatists were well acquainted with commercial affairs. As notoriously they are not, there can be no harm on special occasions in calling in the aid of men well acquainted with particular subjects. Surely Mr Cobden should know something about the manufactures of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and Mr Lindsay ought to know something about ships. Our great statesmen may cram for a specific object, but knowledge so acquired is of very doubtful value. The success of the late much-lamented Mr Wilson was chiefly owing to the fact that he was practically, not theoretically, a man of business. For a similar reason Lord Cowley has been glad to call in the aid of Mr Cobden, and Mr Lindsay has set sail for the United States.

Every now and then the name of Mr Lindsay is put very prominently before the public. There was a time when the Administrative Reform Association was very

popular, and was not Mr Lindsay one of its greatest men? There was a time when emigration was in vogue, and did not Mr Lindsay's ships form the bridge by which the ocean was passed, and El Dorado, as some idly dreamt, won? And now the ruined British ship-owners—the men who have amassed fabulous wealth by the trade they denounce as irretrievably ruined—are moving heaven and earth for a return, in some form or other, of Protection, and can find no language bad enough or harsh enough for Mr Lindsay, because he will not join them in what he deems their mistaken course. It was almost amusing, at the City meeting held about twelve months ago, after Mr Lindsay had tried to get a word in on behalf of Free Trade, to hear Duncan Dunbar recall the word "friend" he had applied to Mr Lindsay ("a man who could utter such sentiments as Mr Lindsay had, he," Mr Dunbar, "could never, never call his friend"). One was reminded of the famous scene in the House of Commons, when the aged Burke renounced for ever the friendship of his pupil and admirer, Fox. What a pity we should have to exclaim, in language but too familiar to the schoolboy—

"Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ."

In the year 1816, in a humble station of life, Mr Lindsay was born at Ayr—that town dear to all admirers of Burns for its

"Honest men and bonnie lasses."

At six, the future ship-owner was left an orphan ; and, when only fifteen years of age, he commenced his career, leaving home with only three shillings and sixpence in his pocket, to push his fortunes as a sea boy. He worked his passage to Liverpool by trimming coals in the coal-hole of a steamer. Arrived in that great commercial emporium, he found himself friendless and destitute, and seven long days passed before he was able to find employment. Let those who tell us that the poor man has no chance in this country—that, be he industrious, moral, and intelligent, he can never rise—that capital is a hard task-master, and holds its victims in worse than American slavery—learn, then, that during this time young Lindsay experienced the most abject poverty—that he was reduced to the necessity of sleeping in the sheds and streets of Liverpool, after eating nothing but what he begged for! At length he was fortunate enough to be engaged as cabin-boy on board a West Indian man-of-war. Frightful were his hardships even then ; but his heart never failed him, and in three years he rose to be second mate. The following year he was first mate, and in his nineteenth year became captain of the "Olive Branch." By this time he had enough of the sea. He had suffered one shipwreck ; had had both legs and one arm broken ; had been cut down by a sabre stroke in a hostile encounter in the Persian Gulf. So we are not surprised to find Mr Lindsay in 1841 agent for the Castle Eden Coal Company. In

1845 he removed to London, and laid the foundation of that extensive business which makes him a competent authority on all matters connected with his craft, and which entitles him to rank with the merchant princes of the metropolis.

Mr Lindsay, in the midst of his upward struggle from poverty to wealth, sedulously sought his own mental improvement. Instead of wasting his spare evening hours in dissipation and idleness, or even harmless recreation, he diligently sought to make up for the defects of his early education, and to acquire that knowledge which, in his case, emphatically became power. The result was, he soon acquired popularity as a writer, especially by his important work on "Our Navigation and Mercantile Laws." His next step was to get into Parliament. He contested Newport, Monmouthshire, in April, and Dartmouth in July, 1852. In March, 1854, after a severe struggle, by a majority of seventeen, he was returned for Tynemouth. In 1857 he was re-elected without opposition, and of Tynemouth he continues to be representative to this day. In every sense of the word he is a free trader. At the City meeting, already referred to, he claimed the right to address the meeting in opposition to the resolution, as he could not allow it to go forth that the distress of the shipping interest was attributable to the existing system of maritime commerce, or the repeal of the navigation laws. The resolution and the memorial presented to the Crown last year were

fallacious. He was favourable to reciprocity; but not enforced reciprocity, because that was protection in its worst form. It would revive the war of classes and the system of commerce which prevailed in the time of Cromwell. Mr Lindsay's opponents may be right, but the extent of our shipping under free trade points to an opposite conclusion.

In size, Mr Lindsay resembles Mr Cobden, nor is he unlike him in shape; but he has a redder face, darker hair, and his voice is of that rich Doric of which a little is quite enough. Pure Scotch is very pleasant to read in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, but one soon tires of it in the House of Commons. It is very probable Mr Lindsay would have remained an obscure man in that illustrious assembly, had not the Crimean war broken out, and our great heads of departments completely broken down. Mr Lindsay was fortunate in finding that the weakest part of the whole affair was precisely that which he knew most about. Accordingly he exposed Government blunders in many ways, and became all at once a notoriety. He was known to speak as one having authority. Had he not originally been a cabin-boy, and now had he not at his command a fleet almost as extensive as that belonging to the Lords of the Admiralty! Heads of departments trembled, for they knew Mr Lindsay understood his own business; whereas, they could make neither head nor tail of theirs. The *Times* admitted Mr Lindsay to be an authority, and the House of Com-

mons, always ready to hear a man when he has something to say, listened when he spoke; strangers stared over the gallery, to the great disgust of the door-keepers, who in vain bawled out, "Keep your seats, gentlemen!" when Mr Lindsay was on his legs. In the lobby he was pointed at as the man who was to save the State; and when Old Drury opened its wide doors for the administrative Reformers, and Mr Lindsay was the attraction of the night, the multitudes who flocked in showed how easily and completely Mr Lindsay had achieved an extensive fame. Yet Mr Lindsay is no orator—no statesman—no scholar, with wise saws and modern instances. Burke would have turned from him with disgust, and Sheridan would have swallowed a bottle of wine in the attempt to elaborate, with regard to him, what he would have endeavoured to pass in society as some extempore jokes. A temporary emergency gave to Mr Lindsay a temporary importance; he said the right thing at the right time; he had to perform the very easy task of picking holes in a very rotten coat, and he performed it easily. More than this he never attempted—more than this, if he be a wise man, he will not attempt. As it is, he has been fortunate in life, more than most men, and need not be ungrateful or rail at the gods if he have not the privilege of dying a Cabinet Minister.

Nor is this to be regretted. A man is happier without the responsibilities of office. Still I like to point out to the illustrious stranger as imperial senators men

who talk provincial English; I like to say, Sir, thirty years back that man was a ragged boy; he was lucky; he got on the right track; he made a fortune, and the people of this country, out of their deference to wealth combined with talent, chose him as a representative. Let me here demonstrate the evanescent nature of reputations. Except when ship-owners are clamorous, Mr Lindsay is forgotten—

> "Oh, no, we never mention him,
> His name is never heard."

His life devoted to commerce, his intellect sharpened, yet have not made him a statesman. The shipping question over, he sinks into the usual track of ordinary M.P.s; in an assembly of educated gentlemen, of logical reasoners, of trained rhetoricians, he is on general subjects easily distanced, and, by his own confession, was easily duped into voting for the Derby Reform Bill, in the belief that it was to have been all that the most ardent reformer could desire. It is not wealth—not success in life—not a lucky speculation, that can compensate for the liberal views and opinions, which, it is true, education does not invariably supply, but which rarely exist without it. In an assembly which ought to be as eminent for its genius and talent and statesmanship as it is now lamentably the reverse, we want something more even than practical men.

## XVII.

## MR EDWIN JAMES, M.P.

LORD, how this world is given to lying! The remark is not original, but true nevertheless. What lies the higher authorities in Church and State sanction! Of course we cannot wonder at lies in public or private life. When Smith tells you he is hasty to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, or that he hopes you will give him a call one evening, you are sure to find him at home. You know Smith does not care a straw whether he ever sees you again or not. King David said all men were liars; but, for unscrupulous lying, for lying like truth, for lying to the utter damnation of the soul, commend me to a barrister. Other men occasionally speak the truth, stick at enormous falsehoods, have now and then qualms of conscience, sometimes display an honest blush of shame; but a lawyer, with a brazen face, with leathern lungs, with front of brass, under the convenient cloak of professional etiquette and zeal, is, I fear, the biggest liar

this side the bottomless pit. In the language of that great thinker, John Foster, I remark—"It is a remarkable and incontestable fact that, throughout the community, men of the legal profession have, as a class, collectively, a much worse reputation for integrity than any other class of men not directly and formally addicted to iniquitous employments. There is a very general and decided feeling that their consciences are of a loose texture; that they easily make their own rules of right and wrong; and that it is peculiarly hazardous and unfortunate to be thrown on their mercy, or to have any important points of interest depending on the discretion of their integrity. . . Again, the public and political conduct of this class of men, as exhibited during the last melancholy stage of our history" (this was written in 1812), "furnishes a strong proof of the general baseness of their principles. It is nearly as a body—it is with a most extremely small number of exceptions—that they supported all manner of corruptions; that they have fiercely and insolently opposed all manner of reforms; that they have gone with the ministry (such a ministry as this country has been under during the last twenty years) through thick and thin. All this, or the substance of all this, it would be mere quibbling and folly to attempt to deny." Well does Bulwer make the chivalrous Captain de Caxton horrified at the thought of his nephew being a lawyer; but in public life we make much of the race. A bar-

rister, of seven years' standing, is a great favourite in the eye of the law. If any berth is to be given away, any commission to be sent to make inquiries, any job to be done, we either send military men or lawyers.—Government could not well make worse selections. Hence it is there are so many lawyers in the House of Commons. The nation is to be robbed and plundered, and they are there to do it. I walk up Regent-street, and meet flaunting females all rouge and lies, I know what they want; and if I go into the House of Commons, and hear lawyers with their tedious orations, "on public grounds, sir, opposing this detestable and pernicious bill," I know what they want, as plainly as if they wrote on their backs the price per annum at which they were on sale. The time when lawyers were serviceable in the House has gone by. The country gentlemen, the commercial gentlemen, the representatives of our boroughs, can now make very decent speeches themselves, and the professional speaker, except in the case of some Indian nabob affair, or the injuries of Baron Bode, are of little avail.

Sir Charles Wetherell was one of the oldest and truest Tories that ever lived. He would have died rather than voted for reform. To the men of Manchester, and Sheffield, and Birmingham, and Leeds, he would have denied the suffrage, while Old Sarum and Gatton he worshipped with religious awe. On one occasion, while travelling through Sussex, Wilberforce stopped to change horses at an old country town.

It suddenly occurred to him that that was the place which he represented in Parliament. He had never been there till then, as it were by accident. Could anything have been more absurd? Yet this was the system which Wetherell declared to be perfection itself. But Wetherell was a lawyer, and a clever one, as well as a politician. In his former capacity, he had to defend Watson on his trial for high treason. Lord Brougham tells us that a lawyer must sacrifice every consideration on earth to insure the success of his client. Sir Charles Wetherell did so, and triumphed. The mob, in its profound ignorance, was delighted—it confounded the lawyer with the politician. Sir Charles Wetherell was in danger of becoming as popular as Sir Francis Burdett; and actually an enlightened radical constituency went so far as to offer its representation to Sir Charles. Mr Edwin James, owing to a similar blunder, attained his political advancement. As a liberal politician, nothing was known of him. He had come forward, it is true, once or twice, but, on each occasion, he had retired in a most mysterious and unaccountable manner. However, it came to pass that a man, of the name of Bernard, was tried for complicity with the Orsini plot. The trial was instituted at the desire of the French Emperor, who, in this case, was served very badly by Lord Palmerston and his English friends. Mr Edwin James was retained for the defence. English sympathies, of course, were in favour of the refugee. The man was

acquitted, and the speech of his advocate was lauded to the skies. The speech was not a great speech, but it was that of a mob orator. It delighted small boys; it was read with rapture in pot-houses. Was not the man who could utter such lofty sentiments, who could thus beard the French Emperor, worthy of a place in the House of Commons? "Most assuredly" was the reply of Marylebone, who returned Mr James at the head of the poll. The triumph was the proudest moment in the lawyer's life; an archangel—supposing an archangel would go through the dirty work of a canvas for a metropolitan and enlightened borough—would have had no chance. On the hustings, immediately after the victory, I never saw a man much more good-natured, or heard a man more facetious, than Mr James. And the crowd were equally exultant; one man, standing by my side, informed me that that night would be discussed, in the House of Commons, the foreign policy of Government—that that night Mr James would take his seat—that there could not have been a more lucky circumstance; and my informant intimated that that night his hero would make a speech that undoubtedly would make despotism tremble all over the earth. My informant was too sanguine; he was evidently under the influence of beer. Mr James did not take his seat that night; did not make his maiden speech there and then; and, for a few days, the proud and perjured tyrants of the world had a merciful reprieve. Let me add that, when Mr Edwin James did make his *dé-*

*but*, the effect was not very great. His plain intimation to Lord John Russell, that no reasonable offer would be refused, was considered indelicate and presumptuous, even in a gentleman of the bar; and, by the time the distinguished advocate had taken his seat, it was clear that he had let himself very considerably down in the estimation of the House. Yet it was apparent, even to the most prejudiced, that the hon. gentleman had much fitting him to gain considerable influence in any assembly. None could deny him considerable fluency of language—considerable readiness, when on his legs—a voice well fitted to claim attention, and a modest assurance not easily to be abashed. Then he was the chosen of Marylebone, and Marylebone is supposed to be one of the wealthiest, the most intelligent, and the most influential, of our metropolitan boroughs. Mr Edwin James sits below the gangway, on the ministerial side, on the benches where the Manchester school, and the very *crême de la crême* of liberalism is gathered. Personally, he is inclined to be stout and red; and his thick neck and full cheeks give him a decidedly apoplectic appearance. His figure is not one calculated for display, nor does he attempt it. He is generally very plainly dressed, and wanders about in the lobby as if he were desirous to have a chat with any one who would take the trouble to have a chat with him; occasionally he may be seen talking with very seedy individuals, chiefly, it may be presumed, deputations from

the Marylebone constituency; for, undoubtedly, the metropolitan constituencies work their members hard. Every man with a grievance goes to them; every disgustingly unappreciated individual, if he be connected with a metropolitan constituency, looks to his representative to vindicate his claim, and to guarantee him his rights. Happy is the M.P. who represents the Orkney Isles; his berth is a sinecure. He seldom sees his constituencies after he has once taken his seat. Fortunately, seas, mountains, valleys are between; but, alas! a Marylebone constituent has only to get into a twopenny 'bus and is down upon his M.P. at once. Then, the Marylebone M.P. has to reside in his parish; he must attend the vestry occasionally; he must attend its public meetings. When its Odd Fellows dine together, he must be there. If Jones' apple-cart is upset by a policeman, he must call the attention of the House to a flagrant outrage on a respectable and unoffending citizen. Churchmen are at him; dissenters will not leave him alone; the licensed victuallers more especially claim him as their own. Every one of his constituents blessed with a crotchet is after him. Alas! there is no peace for a Marylebone M.P. but "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Marylebone may rejoice in her representative; is he not a first-rate advocate, Recorder for Brighton, a friend of Garibaldi and the oppressed?

Mr James's success can be understood immediately you look at him. You can't put a man down who has

made up his mind that he won't submit to such treatment, and Mr James belongs very evidently to this latter class. Nature has meant him for a successful lawyer, and has given him rare faculties for browbeating witnesses and humbuging juries. Mr James shines in this latter capacity; the art with which he performs his task is admirable, and it is that highest kind of art which the victim never for a moment suspects. He seems to say so frankly, and with such an honest air, "Now, gentlemen of the jury, this is a very pretty tale the opposite party have been telling us, it sounds very plausible, and it might impose on some people, but we, old stagers, men of the world, shrewd, deep—very deep—very wide awake, are not to be thus led away. No, no, gentlemen, we—you and I—for you see through the matter quite as plainly as I do—are old birds, and are not to be caught with chaff." And thus Mr James gets the jury on his side. He gratifies their vanity; he does not profess to make things clear to them; he quietly assumes that they know as much about it as himself; his "cheek"—if I may use such a word, and I suppose I may, since our leading critical journal is actually quoted in the Slang Dictionary as an authority for slang—is perfectly bewildering, and must more or less insure success. You are first astonished, then applaud. Thus was it with Mr James's maiden speech. Its cool impudence was too much, even for that illustrious assembly of self-seeking placemen and loungers. Old sinners

felt shocked at his refusal of office, except on certain conditions, before it was offered to him, just as ladies of a certain age are horror-struck at the boldness of pretty girls. But Mr James was in no ways daunted. He felt himself to be just as good as any one else, and, in a little while, he had proved himself to be as hard, and industrious, and able M.P. as any other gentleman. He has secured his position. He has nullified all the prejudices as to his being a failure. It is clear that, with a little more time, he will have vindicated his claims to the lawyer's reward—that reward which, I fear, is more potent than patriotism in a lawyer's breast.

## XVIII.

## SIR JAMES GRAHAM.

The Life of Sir Thos. Fowell Buxton is one that deserves to be studied by candidates for parliamentary renown. In a letter to the late J. J. Gurney, Sir Thomas says the debate on the Manchester Riots "convinced me that I have the opportunity of being a competitor on the greatest arena that ever existed, but it also taught me that success in such a theatre is only for those who devote their lives to it." Sir Thos. declined to make the requisite sacrifice. Sir James Graham has paid the price and takes a foremost rank in any gallery of modern statesmen. He has devoted his whole life to the House of Commons, and he is a fair specimen of a House of Commons orator. "The speaking," wrote Sir Thomas, "required, is of a very peculiar kind. The House loves *good sense and joking* and nothing else, and the object of its utter aversion is that species of eloquence which may be called Philippian. There are not three men from whom a

fine simile or sentiment would be tolerated; all attempts of the kind are punished with general laughter." This was written before Parliamentary Reform was won, but the description is still applicable. Parliamentary speaking has not altered in the least, and Sir James Graham, who won his laurels in the old days of corruption, is still a skilful debater in the greatest arena that ever existed.

"Vidth and visdom grows together" was the remark of no less an acute observer of human nature than the respected parient of the immortal Samiwell Veller. In the case of Sir James Graham this truth is strongly exemplified. In a work, published in 1839, entitled "St Stephens; or, Pencillings of Politicians," I find a chapter devoted to a trio of turncoats. One of them is Sir Francis Burdett—he has long ceased to interest mankind; another, is Lord Stanley—as Lord Derby, he is now the leader of the Conservatives; and the third is Sir James Graham, who is quoted as an example of "the wretched stuff which poor human nature submits to admire and wonder at." No man has been more odious in the eye of the British people. When Sir James, as Secretary of State for the Home Department, laid before the House of Commons the outline of his Factory Education Bill, the Dissenters raised such a storm that the hon. baronet was soon compelled to give way. When Mr Thomas Duncombe proved that he had opened Mazzini's letters, the ferment and outcry was greater still. At his head was

hurled a torrent of abuse; anti-Graham wafers were advertised, and met with an extensive sale. One could scarce believe that Sir James was the same individual who had made radical speeches of the most violent character, who had a hand in drawing up the Reform Bill, and who, as Secretary to the Admiralty, had effected unexampled savings. And now, as you look below the gangway on the ministerial side, and see the gigantic form of Sir James, it cannot but occur to you that in that illustrious assembly there is not another man apparently so wise and wide.

Good fortune has done much for Sir James Graham. She has made him one of the strongest men in the House of Commons, and one of the wealthiest; and, by reason of those two qualities, has he ever been a man of mark. To hear a wealthy baronet talking radicalism thirty years ago, was something wonderful; and, by reason of his immense physical capacity, has he lived down his unpopularity, his political inconsistency, his recklessness on the platform and the hustings, his bitter partizanship, inside St Stephens or out; and his patriarchal appearance quite touches the heart of the stranger in the gallery. If there be truth in physiognomy, Sir James cannot be the atrocious criminal at one time his enemies affirmed he was. He has a portly frame and a most benign presence. See him in a parliamentary fight. Sir James Graham has always a meek smile upon his face, and as he turns to listen to the orator, the Sir Charles Napier it may be, who

pours out upon him the vials of his wrath, he seems to say, "Oh, go on, my good fellow, you are not hurting me, but you are injuring yourself." There he sits, a great mountain of a man, with a calm placid face, which apparently no storm can ruffle or disturb, and with a frame that would make its possessor conspicuous wherever men assembled. Perhaps you are a stranger to the House, and of an excitable temperament. I was wonderfully amused once in the lobby with a youth fresh from his father's flock, who seemed inclined to cheer an orator. "My good friend," said a policeman in the gentlest way, "if you cannot control your feelings, you had better leave the lobby." Perhaps you belong to that class, and cannot control your feelings. As the orator grows frantic, you do the same. As his bile rises, so does yours. You turn the lightning of your eye on the apostate knight of Netherby, the opener of Mazzini's letters, the betrayer of the brothers Bandiera—even in his green old age the slanderer of Layard—and you wonder the earth does not open and swallow him up, as it did Dathan and Abiram of old. Wait a little while. The age of miracles is gone; and yet I will show you a miracle. The orator sits down. Sir James is in no hurry to reply. Slowly he lifts up his big body and rises to speak. At any rate, you say, the House will hoot him—it does nothing so rude, it receives him with cordial cheers. Well, then, Sir James himself will speak with the faltering accents of conscious guilt—on the contrary, he is perfectly un-

embarrassed. Well, then, his defence will be impotent and lame; it will convince no one and disgust all—the real fact is nothing of the kind. It comes out slowly and calmly, as if the orator felt its truth. Letters are read, but all in the calmest and most deliberate manner, which show how very right was Sir James, and how very wrong the wicked man by whom he was attacked. You never heard such a candid speaker in your life. He looks as if he would not do a naughty thing for the world. What a depth of untold tenderness there is in that man's bosom! How kindly he speaks of every one! What innocent simplicity lurks in his face! As he stands, slightly stooping, his arms behind his back, his voice seemingly broken with emotion, you fancy never was there a more injured person; and when he indignantly asks if it is to be supposed that he would forfeit the reputation of a life, when he declares that his character is at stake, that at his time of life—so soon to pass away from among men—it was monstrous to suppose that he would do anything so paltry and mean as that with which he was charged, your warmest sympathies are aroused for the injured baronet, and you become indignant as you remember how he has been the helpless victim of party slander, of personal pique, or lying tongues.

His juvenility is, I imagine, another reason of Sir James's success. He is a boy, and will remain so to the end of the chapter. I know he was born in 1792, that he has been in and out of office times innumerable,

that he has sat on all sides of the House, advocated all sorts of measures, and coalesced with all parties; but the enthusiasm with which he does all this is youthful. He is an artless, simple, unsophisticated boy, devoted to politics. He has accepted office because he delights in activity. He has done some very mischievous and disgraceful things for the same reason; actually, in some instances—as when he denounced Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—he has evinced a sagacity, for which few gave him credit, and which fewer still appreciated at the time; but a boy he is, and will ever remain—his principles not yet fully formed, his judgment not yet fully ripe; but still, from his position, from his abilities, from his cleverness as a debater, from his wide experience, from his intimacy with the great chiefs departed—a man with great influence in the House of Commons, one of the half-dozen whose speeches are looked forward to in every great political crisis. We all know Sir Robert Peel had a high opinion of Sir James, and Sir Robert's opinions had, and still have, immense weight in the House of Commons. In truth, in the House of Commons a man is judged independently of the opinions formed of him out of doors. Hence no juvenile indiscretion on the part of Sir James has permanently affected the high position he took in that assembly when he first entered it, and has ever since retained.

Sir James is emphatically a man of the times and

for the times. As a politician he is again in a somewhat chrysalis state. Perhaps, as he has been somewhat hard on the ballot, he intends supporting that when Parliament meets again. He, it is clear, has cut himself from the Derby party. For the same reason he can never be very closely allied with Lord John Russell. Sir Robert Peel was his Magnus Apollo, and, deprived of his leader, his course is somewhat desultory. His main fault has been this, that as a hard-working, busy party-fighter, he has never studied politics as a science, never been above the tumult and turmoil of party—never risen into the superior elevation of the political philosopher—never got a glimpse of abstract principles. He has contented himself with politics in the concrete; he has wrestled with parties and persons as we can imagine one of his ancestors fought in the jolly old moss-trooping times. Sir James's faults and official blunders have been those of his class. Fontaine tells us of a motherly crab, who exclaimed against the obliquity of her daughter's gait, and asked her if she could not walk steady. The young crab very reasonably pleaded the similarity of her parent's manner of stepping, and asked whether she could be expected to walk differently from the rest of her family. Sir James is like the rest of his family. Letters had been opened by previous Secretaries of State, and when he opened Mazzini's letters he was neither worse nor better than others. If he lay about him pretty freely, it is the manner of all

faction and party fighters to do so; and if he occasionally exhibits intense ignorance of the middle-class public—as shown in his Factory Education Bill—why, country baronets with thirty thousand a year have but little chance of understanding the shopkeepers and Dissenters of our borough towns. An amusing instance of this Sir James displayed not long since. In his speech, a session or two back, in favour of voluntary education, Sir James quoted Mr Baines, of Leeds—not then what he now is, a member of the House—as "a man of talent, though a Dissenter;" as if a man's talents depended on his profession of religion. A man of more philosophical insight than Sir James would have known that genius and talent are of no church. Yet, in the House of Commons, so ignorant are the leading men in it, necessarily, such a phrase passes muster, and Sir James, no doubt, thought he paid Mr Baines a high compliment.

Sir James's deeds will remain to vindicate his claims to respect. On the whole he has been on the side of progress. During the Reform agitation he did much to insure the passing of that measure; and the aid he gave to Sir Robert Peel in fighting the great battle of commercial freedom was of the most invaluable character. As one of the faithful band of "paid janissaries" and "renegades," as they were termed by Lord George Bentinck, Sir James stood by his leader manfully, and fought with a courage the memory of which yet re-

mains; and when, by means of a combination of Protectionists and Whigs, Lord John Russell was placed in office, Sir James helped to preserve the ministry in their free-trade career.

## XIX.

## MR W. WILLIAMS.

It is very odd how little the general run of Members of Parliament understand business. How they can have passed their time to grow thus ignorant is a puzzle. There are, however, illustrious exceptions, and one of these is the Lambeth M.P. Just behind the Treasury Bench, at the end nearest to the strangers' gallery, may be seen a stout, tall, plain-looking gentleman; any one will tell you that is Mr Williams. He is elderly, but looks still strong and useful, and likely to do the state good service. When the late Joseph Hume died, Mr Williams, who prided himself on being his pupil, seated himself in the vacant seat, and, as a disciple, is not unfaithful to the teachings and traditions of his great and lamented master.

The member for Lambeth has this one advantage over the men who laugh at him, that, at any rate, he has one idea, and that idea one of the right sort. He is not a learned man, nor an orator, nor a poet. He

cuts no dash, even as regards his personal appearance, but he has an idea as to economy being a benefit, and is plain, plodding, and persevering. His figure indicates strength rather than grace. His speeches deal rather with facts and figures than with figures of speech, classical quotations, or great principles. In the beginning or the middle of the session you hear little of him. It is true he is in his place, it is true he patiently sits out all the debates, but he seldom addresses the House, and is seldom reported in the daily papers. Wait a little; let July and August arrive, let M.P.s rush out of town in scandalous haste, let burning patriots, who have made grand speeches at the beginning of the season, deliver their farewell orations, shake off the dust of their feet, and indignantly depart; let the long, dull, wearisome nights be devoted to the consideration of the miscellaneous estimates. When the benches are deserted, when jobs are done, when the money of the nation is recklessly and foolishly squandered away, when almost the only men who stop are those who have some little game of their own, then you will see—almost alone, with the voting paper in his hand, which he appears to study as if it were the charter of his salvation — Mr Williams, the Lambeth M.P. He rises and objects; asks for particulars, gets snubbed by officials; sometimes he divides the House; now and then he may snatch a hasty triumph; but it is clear that his presence greatly interferes with the harmony of the even-

ing, and that most of the gentlemen present wish him elsewhere. His *rôle* is an unpopular one, but it is one which the people who pay the piper ought, at any rate, to appreciate and admire.

Mr Williams, somehow or other, has got it into his head that the nation would be much better off if distinguished statesmen and leaders of the House had a better acquaintance with the principles associated, all the world over, with the memorable name of Cocker. A little reflection will show that Mr Williams is not so far wrong as is generally supposed.

We put it to our thoughtful readers whether, in the general break-up of party, and in the confusion of all classes, which exists in the political word, the time has not arrived for a new party and a new cry? A bitter experience has made the general public place very little confidence in public men. The painful truth is becoming gradually clearer and clearer to the most obfuscated intellect, that the aim of professed politicians is place and power rather than the promotion of the public welfare. It is true that the distinguished foreigner, who so often figures in parliamentary debates, were he to judge by the cries he hears during an election, would arrive at a different conclusion. "Palmerston and the vindication of our national honour," "Lord Derby and our glorious constitution in Church and State," "Lord John Russell and Reform," sound very plausibly; and, as he rises from the perusal of the addresses of the rival candidates—as he reads how this one lives only for

the public good; how that one, a lawyer though he be, has refused office rather than not carry out his principles; how a third will die on the floor of the House of Commons, rather than allow an obnoxious measure to pass; and, above all, as he learns from innumerable paragraphs the virtue of the free and independent elector—he is in doubt whether most to admire the felicity of the public in having such devoted M.P.s at its service, or the good fortune of the latter in having so illustrious a body to serve. It is long before the real truth flashes across his mind. That the whole thing has much of the character of a farce; that the election is really carried by a few dirty scoundrels, when contested, and when not, by the influence of some local magnate; that the patriotism of the candidate is about as sincere as the solemn conviction of an Old Bailey barrister, that his client is the most innocent creature under the sun, does not enter into the brain of the distinguished foreigner for a long time; yet, is not such in reality the case?

Far be it from us to inculcate a spirit of political scepticism. The absence of public spirit is a bad sign of the times, it is, indeed, a political calamity when the nation does not believe in its public men. At such times—and surely the present is such a time—it does not become us to fold up our arms and slumber, but rather to rouse up ourselves to activity and effort. A great work lies before us, and a man who would seek to accomplish it would be a public benefactor. We are,

as a nation, weighed down with taxation; the tax-gatherer follows us from the cradle to the grave; there is no solitude in which he does not find a place. Every year the evil is becoming greater. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gives us little hope for the future, and tells us that he must increase that tax which already presses so unfairly on precarious incomes. To the large landlord, to the enormous capitalist, an increase of taxation matters but little. Where an income consists of thousands, a hundred pounds more or less is not of much consequence; but it is very different with the millions to whom a shilling of extra taxation implies the actual abandonment of some comfort or necessary of life. We want to know how long this heavy burden is to be laid on the shoulders of the people? In ordinary life a man with a limited income, if he has an increased expenditure in one direction, economises in another. He wears his old clothes a little longer; takes a less expensive trip; denies himself a few usual indulgences; why should not a nation do the same? Every farthing voted away by a British House of Commons is taken out of the pockets of the people of this country. This is bad in many ways. In the first place, people who can ill afford it have to make many sacrifices to meet the demands of the tax-gatherer; in the second place, it is evident that so keen is the rivalry we have to sustain in the markets of the world with other nations, that it will be our extra taxation that will cripple us in the race; in the third place, it is bad,

morally and politically, for ministers to have so much of the nation's money in their pockets. It is in this direction, then, that we must turn. The money votes will tell whether a man is a true patriot or not. We want more Joseph Humes in the House of Commons; yet, actually, so unpopular is economy in the House, that the senators sneer and would pooh-pooh the only man—we refer to Williams, of Lambeth—who does what few other men in the House have the ability or the courage to perform. Our thoughtless contemporary, *Punch*, repeats the sneer, and an ignorant public applauds. Now Mr Williams deserves better of his countrymen, and Lambeth especially ought to be proud of its representative. It is no joke to stand up in the House of Commons to protest against money votes. The gentleman who does so must wait till late in the evening, and then, if he insists on a discussion, whippers-in, and members, and reporters, who are all tired and want to go home, are angry. Every man hoping at some time or other to dip his fingers in the national purse—that is, as regards the House of Commons—almost every barrister and naval or military officer at least, and a promiscuous multitude beside, however grandly they may talk on financial reform out of doors, are sure to take exception to the amendment, and vote with the majority. Hume lived long enough to overcome the odium of this, but Mr Williams must wait another ten years ere his constant perseverance will first be respected, and then become popular.

Dod describes Mr Williams as a merchant and a Radical reformer, he is in favour of the repeal of the Inquisitional Income Tax, and for the ballot. As an author, he has published two pamphlets; one on the State of Education in Wales, and another on the Defective State of the Representative System. He was first returned to Parliament by Coventry, which city he represented from January, 1835, till the general election in 1847. He was first returned for Lambeth, July, 1850. At the last election there was some talk of a formidable local opposition. Happily, however, the good sense of Lambeth prevailed. When a constituency gets a faithful and hard-working M.P., to cashier him merely to gratify some paltry local vanity is very insane, to say the least. People who, for their own ends, throw dust in other people's eyes, are not to be blamed, but those who submit to that operation, who are thus blinded and bamboozled, are fools indeed.

## XX.

## FRANK CROSSLEY, ESQ.

The West Riding of Yorkshire is the parliamentary blue ribbon. A king can make a belted knight, but it is not in the province of king or queen to create any man, however gifted, knight of the shire for the West Riding. It returned Wilberforce, and struck the knell of the slave trade. It returned Henry Brougham, and inaugurated the triumph of Reform. By its return of Richard Cobden, in 1847, all England felt that free trade had been secured. To canvass the West Riding a man must have a considerable amount of spare time, and energy, and cash, and if he be an unknown man, even these will fail him in the hour of trial. At the last election of Wilberforce, in 1807, upwards of 23,000 persons voted. The poll was kept open for fifteen days, and the costs of the contest were estimated at half a million. Elections are not quite such costly affairs as they were, but they are still far too expensive and wearying; the conse-

quence is, the public has but a limited choice. People select not the best man, but the best man with cash. In 1852 the registered electors for the West Riding were 37,319. It is not easy to reach this mass of people—a people perhaps less dominated over by landlords than any constituency in the kingdom—for little more than four per cent. of them live by agriculture. The candidate, it is evident, must be well known—he must have money, for that is a *sine qua non* in a West Riding election—he must have brains, for in Yorkshire people mostly have big heads—and his politics must be popular, for as the aristocracy send their sons and scions into Parliament to preserve the governing power in their own hands, it is evident that the democracy when they have the chance will expect their candidate to do battle on their behalf. Now with all these conditions Frank Crossley complies. By honest labour and the exercise of his brains he has got to be where he is. He is a representative man. In our villages and towns there are many such, but they have not chosen the better path. They have become intemperate or dissipated, they have missed the tide which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, and they have listened to the Circe voices which wreck men's careers and ruin men's souls. All along our land they lie in swinish repose, the men who might have won for themselves fame and power, and conferred benefits untold on their fellows. If they have become rich, with ineffable littleness they

have turned against the class from whence they sprung, and have vainly endeavoured to ape the fashions of those by whom they are justly derided and despised; but it is chiefly under the cloud of adverse circumstances that the capabilities which lie hidden in all men, as much in the Saxon peasant as in the Norman lord (for wonderful is the generosity of nature), are obscured and blotted out. Of too many it may be said, in the language of Gray, language likely to be applicable to large masses to the end of the chapter, that

> "Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
> And froze the genial current of the soul."

Happily, in Frank Crossley's case the "chill penury" of the poet existed only in a comparative degree, as contrasted with the wealth he and his family were in time to attain, and was soon turned into a genial affluence. Happily, we say, but it is not always that affluence has a genial effect; it acts on some as an east wind, and withers up all the graces of human character. Some men it altogether ruins. God grants them their desire, but sends leanness to their souls. If they were Dissenters they become High Church, and sneer at the conventicles. If they were Liberals they become Conservatives, and think Lord Derby the most chivalrous nobleman under the sun. If they have poor relations they despise and cut them; they treat them as Jeames de la Pluche did poor Mary Ann. "Once for all," as that distinguish-

ed individual informed the Lady Angelina, "once for all, suckmstances is changed betwigst me and er; it's a pang to part with her, says I, my fine hi's filling with tears; but part with her I must."

As an active philanthropist Mr Frank Crossley is well and widely known. Halifax, which he first represented in Parliament, and where his manufactory is situated, bears witness to his munificence. These Lancashire and Yorkshire people, when they make money, make it not as we do in the South, by hard and unremitting industry, but on a grand scale. And they spend it on an equally grand scale. Go to Scarborough and see the expenditure of these men; it quite pales our London extravagance; fortune has been liberal to them, and they are liberal to all around. No ladies are so splendidly dressed, so expensively educated, so well provided with handsome equipages, and the other outward signs of wealth, as their wives and daughters. And the wealth they have freely won, they freely distribute; charity finds in them willing friends; misfortune rarely appeals to them in vain. If the town in which they reside requires a literary institution, arboretum, or a park, they are not backward in giving it. A thousand pounds or two is of little consequence to them. And thus Mr Brown gives Liverpool a free library, or Mr Strutt presents Derby with an arboretum, or Mr Frank Crossley bestows on Halifax a free park. And we all admire the generosity, and feel that such use of wealth—to the

credit of our great merchants and manufacturers be it written—is by no means rare. For the successors of the Medici we have to look now-a-days to the merchants and manufacturers, who, in defiance of Mr Ruskin, have become rich.

As a politician, Frank Crossley may be defined as belonging to his class. He is a manufacturer, not a landlord; and he represents a manufacturing, not an agricultural constituency. It is just such men we want in the House of Commons. Men who have no connection with trade and commerce are sure to make a mess of it when they come to legislate respecting such matters. As an instance, let me take the following extract from the *Times* of October 6th. "It appears," says the writer, "a statement was published a few months back to the effect that a large trade might be opened up by a short land route from our Indian possessions to the western frontier of China, and the project excited very favourable attention among the commercial classes in London and the provinces. Any one glancing at a map of Asia will be struck with the proximity we have already attained to China by means of our acquisitions in Pegu. From the port of Rangoon our territory extends towards China a distance of 250 miles. We then come to the territory of the King of Burmah, and across this, which is also about 250 miles in width, we come to the Chinese frontier town of Esmok. We are thus brought into direct communication with that people almost at our

own doors, the whole of the navigation *viâ* Singapore and the Chinese Sea would be saved, and we should moreover reach a class of the population with whom we could never otherwise come in commercial contact, even if our political relations with the Chinese Government were of the most unrestricted and cordial character. What, then, is the difficulty? The first idea likely to occur is that the King of Burmah would throw obstacles in our way. Such, however, is not the case. The King of Burmah seems to understand commercial interests better than some English statesmen, for he is represented to be friendly to anything that will promote traffic through his dominions. Apparently there is no difficulty except the old one. Our Foreign-office are not fond of new questions, and least of all of commercial questions. The Leeds Chamber of Commerce recently memorialized the Government on the subject. They represented its important bearing on the interests not only of our home manufacturers, merchants, and shipowners, but of our traders in all parts of India. The Chambers of Commerce of Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, and Liverpool had previously made similar representations. The reply has been such as to damp as far as possible all effort in the matter. Nothing was required but a civil negotiation with the King of Burmah, which the Government alone can make, and that in any future diplomatic arrangements with the Chinese authorities the town of Esmok should be re-

cognized as a legal place of trade. Lord John Russell, however, thinks that 'much inconvenience' might arise from such a 'novel' proposition. Moreover, it would be 'impossible to protect British trade at so inland a city,' or 'to exercise due control over British subjects.' Next to the possibility of anything that might cause 'inconvenience' to the Foreign-office, the idea of allowing 'British subjects' to run without leading-strings has always been most distasteful to that department. The Chambers of Commerce have likewise been furnished with a hint that they know nothing about the true interests of trade, since the very measure for which they are now praying, under the idea of extending it, would only bring it into jeopardy. 'Redress for any wrong done in such a remote quarter as Esmok,' observes his Lordship, 'could in all probability only be obtained by applying pressure at places more accessible, and so placing in jeopardy the more important interests of British trade on the seaboard of China.'" Gentlemen of rank in the Government departments do not see—as people connected with trade and commerce see and feel—the importance of little things—the advantages of even the slightest reduction in taxation; that where the farmer feeds and maintains ten families, the manufacturer, or large employer of labour, can do the same for a hundred, and that the primary care of a statesman or legislator should be that, in every way possible, the taxes on industry should be annihilated and

the sources of labour set free. Gentlemen fail to understand these things as great employers do. The latter have not had their fair share in Parliament. A change is taking place in this respect. It is time it were so, for so eager is the rivalry of commerce, that it is quite impossible we can maintain our position at the head of the world's markets unless we reduce our national expenditure, sweep away all vexatious imposts—such as that on paper—from our statute book, and give the working man and his master all the help we can. If we do not do this, America, France, Germany—where the cost of living is less—will day by day surpass us, and we shall decline, as did Tyre and Sidon in days gone by. It is for this reason that men like Frank Crossley are so useful in the House of Commons, and need to have their number increased. As to dogmatic politics, of course Mr Crossley is decidedly an advanced Liberal. We know what are the politics of his class; the extension of the suffrage, the protection of the ballot, and the separation of Church and State. The temperance world find in him an uncompromising champion, and the dissenting religious public is familiar with his face when May arrives, and Exeter Hall is thronged. Dissenting ministers who have gone down to Halifax to preach have told us of their surprise at finding an M.P. and a rich and great manufacturer acting as a clerk, and giving out the hymns. But we speak of him as a statesman.

In the House of Commons he is easily discernible

below the gangway on the Ministerial side. He is a strong, well-looking man, in the very prime of life—just such a powerful-looking man as you may often see in the streets in fustian; and his black beard and white waistcoat render him conspicuous from afar. You can see Mr Frank Crossley is not a man to be daunted—has true Anglo-Saxon capacity for work and solid pluck—and if the time comes when statesmanship will be synonymous with administrative capacity, such a man will be in request. Surely it is no bad test of a man's qualification for office, that as a manufacturer, or merchant, or shipowner, he should have organized and carried out successful operations in many lands and amongst many men. Surely such an education is at least equal to that which can be acquired by contact with grooms and stable-boys, and game-keepers, and ballet-girls, and the toadies who always prey upon elder sons. Surely some of our ablest legislators—the men most potent in the Commons—are men of Mr Crossley's class. The admirers of our aristocracy tell us that it is the finest race in the world. You would not get this idea from a glance at the Commons. There are few more puny-looking men than Lord John Russell. You pass Lord Stanley in the street without giving him a second look. We know more than one lord in the House who, all curled and scented, and bedizened, reminds you rather of a baboon than a man. In Mr Crossley's pale and full, yet determined face, you read that his life has been one of

hard endeavour; that he has had little time to waste. As an orator, you see that he is in earnest; that he has no words to spare; that he means what he says; that he is not a professional talker—that curse of our age and country—and that when he has said what is in him, he will not detain you one moment longer. Hence it is seldom that he speaks in the House of Commons; but he is regular in his attendance, and votes always—according to the opinion of his constituents—on the right side.

## XXI.

## MR BENTINCK.

An attempt was made last session to repudiate the leadership of Mr Disraeli by a certain portion of the Conservative party, and an article in the *Quarterly Review*, supposed to have been written by Lord Robert Cecil, was undoubtedly a manifesto in favour of the attempt. It was clearly with reluctance that the Tory party were compelled to do homage to the strength of brain of their cleverest man and most accomplished debater. Had Lord George Bentinck lived, his lead would have been universally acknowledged. Upon his sudden and lamented decease, the respectable and virtuous Sir John Pakington would have taken his place, had he been at all equal to the position; but as he was not, and as Disraeli was the only man who was, the latter gained at once the lead, for which, undoubtedly, he had long been aiming; but he did so under considerable disadvantages. In the first place, his origin was unpleasing to the

landed gentry; in the second place, he was one of your "author fellows;" and, in the third place, he occasionally indulged in language that sounded alarmingly liberal; but there was no help for it, and so for years the country gentlemen followed Mr Disraeli into the lobby, and cheered him when he pitched into Lord John Russell or Mr Bright, as they always do cheer their chiefs. However, a change was at last determined on. On the second bench on the Opposition side, at the extreme end, furthest from the Speaker, sat a very florid, large-limbed, light-haired, English country gentleman, by no means backward in addressing the House, and one of its most patient and industrious members. You rarely saw Mr Bentinck—for it is he of whom we write—absent when the House was sitting. Like Sir James Graham, Mr Bentinck is a man of powerful and well-developed physical constitution; and in the House of Commons, as almost everywhere else, physical strength carries the day. There is no standing up against matter; you may despise it; you may demonstrate its non-existence; you may show how absurd it is for matter to wrestle with mind; but matter is omnipotent, nevertheless. Tom Sayers had more science than the Benicia Boy, but the latter would have, I believe, beaten the former, nevertheless, because he stood a few inches higher in his shoes. In a crowd, the bigger a man is, and the louder his voice, the better I can see and hear him; and the House of Commons is a crowd. The

House of Commons will not, like most crowds, accept mere bigness and hardiness; unlike a religious crowd, for instance, it would not grow frantic in favour of a Spurgeon, but of a certain number of men who devote themselves to it; and the House of Commons is a jealous mistress—as a rule, the most successful will be the men of size; and Mr Bentinck is a man of size—one of the biggest men on his own side of the House. Mr Bentinck, born in 1803, is the eldest son of the late Vice-Admiral William Bentinck, representative of a junior branch of the Duke of Portland's family,—entered Parliament, and was first returned for West Norfolk in 1852. West Norfolk is always supposed to be very Conservative, as much so as any district in England; and Mr Bentinck is Conservative from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. Of the celebrated minority who, in 1853, voted a censure of free trade, he was one; and of course he is for inquiry into Maynooth.

The position of Mr Bentinck may be described graphically as in the very heart of the Conservative party. Neither on the first bench of Opposition nor on the Treasury bench may you look for the finest specimens of unmitigated Whiggery or Conservatism; on neither of those prominent seats are the clever men—the parliamentary tacticians—the leaders who do not wish to say more than they can help—to compromise themselves more than they can help—to excite too inconvenient an enthusiasm, or too audacious a hope.

Very old stagers and very artful dodgers are they. Somewhere or other, I have read of an Eastern sage, who advised his disciples in adversity to act as if they might one day be prosperous; and, in prosperity, to act as if they might soon be reduced to want. The spirit of this precept is admirably carried out by party leaders on either side the House. Sir Robert Peel understood this better than any one, and hence his extraordinary success. When speaking, he always sought for what, in a letter to the Bishop of Oxford, he called House of Commons arguments. In a letter to the same individual, dated March 20th, 1828,—during the Roman Catholic crisis,—he says, "The mode in which it is most prudent to discuss any question in the House of Commons, must be determined by a variety of considerations, of which it is not easy for persons at a distance to judge. One of these circumstances, and a most material one, is the prospect of being victorious or being beaten. If you are to be beaten, the higher the tone you take the more creditable it may be to the individual member who takes it; but, let me add, the more complete is the triumph over the party on whose behalf it is taken." And thus all leaders speak with more or less reserve, and when seemingly most open or candid, are always, in the language of the turf, attempting to hedge. Lord Palmerston has done this. In the great free trade debate, Mr Disraeli tells us, in his "Lord George Bentinck: a political Biography," how, in the midst of a first-rate free-

trade speech, the noble premier expressed himself in favour of a low fixed duty on the importation of corn, and how the countenances of the free-traders changed, and how a metropolitan member, who had been applauding vociferously, whispered to a friend, "He has spoilt a capital speech; what could have induced him to bring in a fixed duty?" Lord Palmerston knew what he was about. Mr Disraeli adds, "There is diplomacy even in debate. Lord Palmerston threw a practised and prescient eye over the disturbed elements of the House of Commons; and, two months afterwards, when a Protectionist Ministry on moderate principles was not impossible, the speech of the noble lord was quoted by many as a rallying point." In the same session Lord John Russell did the same in the debate on the Irish measures, which he first approved of, but was induced to oppose, when he saw that, by joining with the Protectionists, he could put Sir Robert Peel in a minority. Now, immediately behind the chiefs are the second benches, and on these second benches are the men who make brave speeches, and declare the faith that is in them without reserve. They have no need to mince matters, to be constrained or reserved; they make the speeches which youthful politicians admire as bold, and manly, and outspoken; and it is they who, when the time comes, at the bidding of their leaders, and for the credit of their party, very quickly swallow all their big words, and vote, not perhaps that black is white, but in a very different manner

to that which you would have anticipated. In the House of Commons they answer a useful purpose. All legislation is more or less of a compromise; no Minister can expect to carry what he likes; no chief of opposition can hope for victory in every struggle; but it is well on either side that the extreme views of either party are uttered. Just as out-of-doors, by the platform orators of our public meetings things are said, and enthusiastically received at the time, the consideration of which may materially advance or retard a measure, and yet which, in the cool light of reason, may appear utterly senseless and absurd. Now, what public orators are to the House of Commons the gentlemen on the second benches are to their respective leaders. They are the men who exclaim, "*Fiat justitia, cælum ruat,*" who never betray their principles, who never abuse the sacred trust reposed in them by their constituents, who have a solemn duty to discharge, (see parliamentary reports everywhere,) and will discharge it at whatever cost. It would be inconvenient for leaders of party to talk in this way. "No man knows what an hour may bring forth" is true everywhere, but especially in public life; but every man has his opinions, and if it is inexpedient for him to state them, still he is not sorry to hear them ventilated by irresponsible speakers on irresponsible benches. Mr Bentinck, however, may be taken not only to perform this useful work, but as more or less a representative of the county party—a party fallen in some degree from

its high estate, but still, very rightly, a formidable power in the House of Commons. No minister can stand against them—"the men of metal and large-acred-squires." How graphically has Disraeli spoken of their desertion of Sir Robert Peel, on the memorable 25th of June, 1846! It was impossible, Disraeli writes, that he could have marked without emotion the secession of "the flower of the great party which had been so proud to follow one who had been so proud to lead. They were men to gain whose hearts, and the hearts of their father, had been the aim and exultation of his life. They had extended to him an unlimited confidence and an admiration without stint. They had stood by him in the darkest hour, and had borne him from the depths of political despair to the proudest of living positions. Right or wrong, they were men of honour, breeding, and refinement, high and generous character, great weight and station in the county, which they have ever placed at his disposal. He must have felt something of this while the Mannerses, the Somersets, the Bentincks, the Lowthers, and the Lennoxes, passed before him." There was a time when land indicated everything—wealth and fitness for rule; and the possession of ripe experience and administrative capacity were all supposed to reside in the landowners, just as, at one time, the clergy were the great statesmen of England, of Europe, of the world. And still the landed class must be a power. They have leisure, wealth, and can command a certain

amount of political influence. They are of course Conservative. The present state of things gives them power; why then should they find fault with it? In the Army, or the Navy, or the Church, they find employment and emolument for their younger sons; why then should they seek for reform, especially as on all hands it is admitted to be difficult to stop the tide of innovation? They have a natural horror of France, for in France there are no great landed proprietors, and the peasants are landowners, and almost as independent as themselves. They are partial to

> "Squires, with brains made clear
> By the irresistible strength of beer."

In their way, they are well-meaning, honest men, and fervent believers in old ways and ancient traditions. Mr Bentinck is a fine specimen of the class; but leadership in the House of Commons requires something more—a something more which, unfortunately, he does not possess. Generally, parliamentary leaders have been distinguished men. The second-class men who have taken that high position may be counted on one's finger. Their time is gone by.

## XXII.

## EDWARD BAINES.

Lord Holland was a Whig nobleman, and, we dare say, gave on appropriate occasions the Liberty of the Press. Tom Moore was a gentleman of the press, and in common with more exalted literary gentlemen had the run of Holland House. We read in Moore's diary an account of a breakfast in that headquarters of Whiggery in 1831: "Talked of the state of the press, the great misfortune of the total separation that had taken place between those who conduct it and the better rank of society; even from literature it had become in a great measure separated, instead of forming, as in France, a distinguished branch of it. Now you," he said, "and all the other eminent literary persons of the day, keep as much aloof from the gentlemen of the press as we of the political world do, and they are therefore thrown, with all their force and their virulence unsoftened by the commerce of society, to form a separate and hostile class of themselves."

We have here the accepted creed in good society. It is true Lord Palmerston tells us he has met Mr Delane of the *Times* in society, and he has had the honour of receiving him at his own house, that he found him a very agreeeble and intelligent gentleman; but then Lord Palmerston never was a Whig, and people at his time of life are not particular as to what company they keep.

In England journalism, like virtue, is its own reward. Wordsworth tells us,

> "We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
> Whereof comes in the end despondency and madness."

But the poet may become a lion, may have a pension, may die poet-laureate. All abuse the literary man.—Lord John Russell says he is prone to be discontented with the Government under which he lives—a feeling as natural to him as the attachment of the Bedford family to Woburn Abbey and the glorious Reformation. Undoubtedly the proper place for the journalist is the House of Commons. Did we proceed upon the supposition that governing was a science and not an hereditary gift, not a freak of nature, as the thick upper lip of the House of Hapsburg, but a capacity only to be found in men of strong natures, a capacity, moreover, becoming stronger and wiser—as it is wisely nurtured and exercised, the journalists in the House of Commons would be a numerous class. As it is, the loss

is chiefly that of the nation, for perhaps the journalist is the only man in England who studies politics for their own sake. The scion of the aristocracy looks upon the representation of his division of the county as one of his hereditary rights and duties—a bore, perhaps, but one of the penalties he must pay for being so immensely cleverer and wiser than the rest of humanity. His father is the largest proprietor in Blankshire, and the estate always returns the M.P. That honour is transmitted with the family spoons, and will be till such time as Mr Bright's reformed constituencies shall ask of a man—not what acres are his by the accident of birth—but what are his capabilities and brains. The lawyer would laugh at you as a simpleton if you supposed for an instant that he goes through the expense and trouble of a parliamentary election for any other purpose than that of his own promotion. The soldier or the sailor seeks a seat in Parliament for the same reason. The merchant and the contractor, and the manufacturer, are more prone to look after their own interests than those of the public. There are many well-meaning men blessed with long purses who are returned on account of local influence and unlimited expenditure, merely for the sake of a little natural and not discreditable vanity, but the journalist is the only man whose days and nights are devoted to politics, who knows better than all other men the state of public feeling, the ignorance or the prejudice and the passions of the hour, who can

best distinguish the genuine wants and wishes of the age, and is most given to the solution of temporary problems by the application of abstract principles and eternal truths; and yet this is the man who most rarely enters the walls of St Stephen's. Remember how the Tories despised and ill treated Canning, and how Whigs, like Fox and Lord Holland, underrated Sheridan and Burke on account, chiefly, it may be presumed, of their literary character. In politics, it seems as if there was a dead set against brains. It is true that we suffer for this; that if we go to war our armies perish, as in the Crimea or at Walcheren; that we hold India by an army where mutiny seems chronic; that our taxation has reached a climax which to all thoughtful men is appalling; that we have forfeited our continental friendships; that nowhere are the poor so poor, so depraved, so ignorant, as in this land of enormous wealth, where we have an aristocracy and a State Church the wealthiest in Europe. It is true we suffer all this in good company, and that so indomitable is English pluck that we keep right in the main; but this could be achieved at a much less expenditure of precious treasure and still more precious blood and brain. Tom Moore tells us of a party at which were present a country squire and a poet; the former was wonderfully polite to the latter, and in adjourning to the next room offered him precedence. When told, however, the individual was a mere poet, "Oh!" said he, "I know my place," and rudely

pushing in before, left the poor poet to follow. Our statesmen treat the journalist in the same way. If we are ruined we are rejoiced to learn that it is not by what Lord John Russell termed, when he was making such a mess of it at Vienna, "the ribald press." Of the institution thus termed, Mr Edward Baines is one of the most distinguished members. Few country journals have a wider circulation than the *Leeds Mercury*, and of that journal Mr Baines has been the chief conductor and proprietor these many years. His father founded the paper; was a model middle-class man, and represented the borough of Leeds; and the son has religiously followed in his father's steps. He has been a public man ever since he has arrived at manhood; but it was only at the last election, and when he had reached middle age, that he became M.P. for his native town. Mr Baines, senior, was a Whig, for the Whigs abolished the Test and Corporation Acts, the Whigs made Leeds a borough, the Whigs made Mr Baines an M.P., and the present M.P. for Leeds still retains that veneration for Lord John Russell which formed part of the political creed of all Whig families in the Reform epoch. Yet in some things he has outgrown his early training. The dissent of the present generation is more a matter of principle and less of a practical grievance than it was, and Mr Baines is an earnest dissenter, and this earnestness has led him far from Whiggism. It is easy to see how this is the natural result of rigid

Nonconformity. If, as Mr Baines believes, the voluntary principle is amply sufficient to satisfy the spiritual wants of the nation, *a fortiori* the educational wants of the nation may be satisfied in a similar manner. Carry out this principle, and Government becomes little better, as regards home matters, than a matter of police. Lord Macaulay, in one of his papers in the *Edinburgh Review*, in reply to Mr Gladstone, came to a similar conclusion; but the difference between him and Mr Baines is, that the one contemplated the case in its spiritual, the other in its secular aspect. It is Mr Baines's religiousness that has made him a politician and an M.P., and hence it was the moment he became the latter that he obtained a Parliamentary committee to do away with what is called the Bible monopoly, that is, a monopoly by which no one is allowed to print the Bible in England but the printers of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the printers to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty. His other public acts all flow from the same principle. Let the voluntary principle be fully carried out, and what, argues Mr Baines, what evil can it not remove? Temperance societies will abolish drunkenness, educational societies will abolish ignorance, religious societies—alias churches—will clothe the land with Gospel life and light. Mr Baines may be right or wrong, but we always know where to find him. Let the voluntary principle prevail, is the burden of his song; this has led him far from Whiggery,

otherwise he is a Whig, and inclines to Lord John Russell's lead. Of the school, not growing, rather otherwise, and somewhat inclined to intolerance, of which Edward Miall of the Nonconformist is the literary, Edward Baines may be considered as the parliamentary head; he represents a society which has a very long name, and which flatters itself that it has become respectable since it has dropped the vulgar designation of Anti-State Church. As an orator, Mr Baines is in no wise remarkable. There is no brilliancy or attempt at display about him. He is a well made man, of average size, pale, industrious, and persevering. As a man of business he bears a high character. In the House of Commons he represents the great middle-class dissenting public, a public that takes delight in missionary societies—in the anti-slavery cause—in the promotion of peace—in philanthropy in general; and sure are we that in that assembly they could not have a more fitting or more creditable representative.

## XXIII.

## W. JOHNSON FOX.

THERE is a virtue in our English constitution that, however aristocratic it may be, it is not exclusive; here a low-born man may rise. It is true, at first he has a hard time of it, but it is equally true that, if he have talents—and sense enough to use them—he can climb up into a position of equality with the highest and the noblest in the land. When the Ten Hours' Bill was before the House of Commons, the late Mr Joseph Brotherton, then M.P. for Salford, alluded to the period of his life when he was a factory boy, and detailed the hardships and wrongs to which he was subjected, and the resolution that he had formed—to improve the condition of the factory hands, should he ever have the power. At the conclusion of his speech, Sir James Graham rose up and declared, amid the plaudits of the assembly, that he did not know before that Mr Brotherton had sprung from so humble

an origin, but that it made him more proud than ever of the House of Commons, to think that a man rising from that condition should be able to sit side by side and on equal terms with the hereditary gentry of the land. A barber's grandson we have known to become Lord Chancellor; a linen-draper's son, in our time, has been an archbishop. Privates rise from the ranks, and some of our naval heroes had names not supposed to indicate good family. A successful commercial career has also lifted a man into the privileged circles of the Upper Ten Thousand. Still, the cases are few in which a man without wealth or aristocratic connection has been chosen by the English people to represent them in their own house. Even when a class has been strong enough to send a man to St Stephen's to look after their own peculiar interests, his career has not been flattering nor his success great. The West Indian proprietors did not do themselves much good by returning Peter Borthwick. Feargus O'Connor got into Parliament, and Chartism immediately died out. The Tower Hamlets had little to pride themselves on in the success of Mr George Thompson; and Edward Miall, though he once sat for Rochdale—and took a respectable position in the House—was defeated, I fear, in not the most creditable manner, and has since found no constituency sufficiently independent of local influences to return him. But occasionally we have an illustration of the fact that learning is better than

house or land, and this has been illustrated in the person of Mr Fox—whose father was a very small farmer in Suffolk, whose connections were of the humblest character, who himself worked as a lad in a Norwich factory, and who now represents one of our most democratic boroughs—that of Oldham. Mr Fox's position is creditable alike to himself and his constituents. Practically, it is an argument in favour of the extension of the franchise, which cannot be lost on a thinking, impartial public.

Years and years back, in the thinly-populated district of Homerton, there was an academy—belonging to that most respectable body of dissenters then called Independents, now Congregationalists—presided over by that learned and pious divine, the late Dr Pye Smith, whose Scriptural Testimony to the Messiah is still an authority in theological circles. To this academy the youthful Fox was sent, at the suggestion of a congregation worshipping in a very ancient building—yet, I believe, existing in Norwich—who had witnessed the talents of the youthful disciple, and deemed that he might become a teacher and preacher among themselves. Mr Fox passed through his academical career successfully, and was settled, as the phrase is, as a minister somewhere in Hampshire. So far the result was favourable, and the Norwich people prided themselves on their sagacity. The time now arrived when they were to be disappointed. In those days Neology had not made its appearance, but Unita-

rianism had; and by the orthodox it was regarded as just as bad. To borrow a simile from Dryden's "Hind and Panther," Reynard ravaged the garden, and pulled up and destroyed fruit and flower. One of the buds thus rudely torn away was William Johnson Fox. Possibly, he was of a disputatious turn; possibly, he was led away by that celebrated William Taylor, the correspondent of Southey, who first made German literature known to the English, and who conferred on the old cathedral city in which he lived a literary reputation, which Norwich has ever since done its best to retain; possibly, Fox had never been very orthodox. However, the time came when he publicly abandoned the denomination to which he belonged, and became a Unitarian minister. Ultimately he settled down in South-place, Finsbury-square, London. His Sunday morning orations were a great success; he gathered around him many of the wits of London—Dickens, and Douglas Jerrold, and Macready were among his auditors; he edited a magazine now defunct, wrote in the *Morning Chronicle* and other papers; and as lecturer, and wit, and man of letters, took high rank in London life.

Nor is this to be wondered at. A man of wide reading, ready memory, with a strong sense of humour, and inclining to the liberal and popular view of things, if able to talk at all may be sure not to talk in vain. The times also were propitious. When Mr Fox commenced public life, people had not become indif-

ferent to politics, and struggled fiercely against the optimist conclusion—

"Whatever is is right."

The men with whom he lived had seen Sidmouth cover the land with a network of spies and informers; had seen the Habeas Corpus Act suspended; had heard of the massacre at Peterloo; had applauded while Hone badgered Ellenborough to death; and had sympathized with Hunt when in his cell for calling the Prince of Wales an Adonis of fifty. They had been seduced by Godwin as he wrote of political justice; by Owen's New Moral World; by Shelley, as he passionately inveighed against the society which had robbed him of his children, and had driven him an outcast from his ancestral home. They had seen Sir Samuel Romilly in vain pleading that a poor wretch should not be hung for stealing goods of the value of five shillings; and their newspapers had told them how bishops and royal dukes had swelled the majority in the British senate in favour of the accursed slave trade. Hints that reached them of doings at the Brighton Pavilion—of the disgusting revelations of Mrs Clarke—of the great trial at Westminster Hall, when the character of an English Queen was at stake, had made the middle and lower classes view with infinite alarm the aristocracy and all connected with them. In those days a powerful writer, an eloquent orator, could do much, and Mr Fox laboured at his vocation, and not

in vain. It seems to me we have no such orators now. It seems to me that we have fallen on evil days. It seems to me that duty has lost her charms, and that right or wrong are viewed by men now only with an impartial eye. I may be wrong—I hope I am.

But it is time I point him out. You are in the Speaker's gallery. As you look towards the ministerial side, about half-way down, you will see at the end of the fourth bench the subject of the present sketch. You cannot mistake him; there is not such another figure in the House. There are fat men in the House, there are short men; but there are none who so combine fatness and shortness as does Johnson Fox. There are serious, reverend-looking gentlemen in the House, Mr Spooner is one; but there are none so serious and reverend-looking as Fox, who not only wears a Puritan hat, but who wears it with a Puritan air, and whom you might easily imagine side by side with Praise-God-Barebones, or Hew Agag in pieces before the Lord. The upper part of the face is that of the divine, the lower part that of the alderman. There is a rare world of speculation in that eye, and of good cheer in that double chin. How out of that pile of flesh there can come forth a clear, articulate sound, and some considerable amount of superior thought, is to me a mystery, or would be, did I not see upon the shortest and fattest possible body the largest possible head, still adorned by thick masses of grey hair, parted in the middle and hanging down on

each side—altogether a face resembling very much that of John Bunyan. Mr Fox's collar is down—no collar could stand up round such a chin—and an old-fashioned suit of black completes his *tout ensemble*. If his hat is on, you feel inclined to adopt the slang of the streets, and respectfully to ask the honourable gentleman, "Who is his hatter?" for it is low and broad-brimmed, and of a style that never would have won the smile of a Count d'Orsay. The resemblance, then, is complete; and if you could believe there were Puritans in these degenerate days —these days, when even the press has become flunkified, when actually one of our popular teachers tells us, that it is a sign of respectability to have an account at a bank—if, I repeat, that in such times as these you can imagine the men whose quaint words, and gloomy creeds, and self-sacrificing lives were heroic and marvellous then, and are heroic and marvellous still—still existent, you would swear that chief among them was William Johnson Fox.

But Mr Fox is on his legs. What a clear, musical, yet somewhat melancholy and mannered voice he has—how studied yet how natural is his air—how effective is his humour, and how marvellous his power of constructing climaxes! At any rate, there is nothing of the demagogue about him. There is no screaming, no vulgarity, no disgusting vehemence of matter or manner; but he gives you the

idea of gentleness, and thought, and power. You tell me he is monotonous. Well, so he is. He stands in the same position invariably, and speaks with the same tone. When you have heard him once you need not hear him again. Look at him; his head is slightly on one side, his left arm crossing his breast supports his right elbow, and, as he declaims, the fore-finger on his right hand emphatically rises and falls. But Mr Fox is a speaker, not a debater. His style of speaking has been born elsewhere than on those benches, and may be read and understood as well out of the House as in it—as well next year as this. Mr Fox is the pulpit orator in the House of Commons. His speaking is that of a man who has, all his life, had a little perch to himself, in which he can teach, and from which he can lay down the law; and Mr Fox is as much in it in St Stephen's as when standing in South-place, Finsbury-square. Well might George Stephenson once say to Sir Robert Peel, "Why of all the powers above and under the earth, there seems to me to be no power so great as the gift of the gab."

## XXIV.

## MR FREDERICK PEEL.

THE newspapers have just recorded the appointment of Mr Frederick Peel as Financial Secretary of the Treasury, in the place of Mr Samuel Laing. The office is an important one, and one in which a man inclined to be economical may do an immense amount of good in these days of extravagant expenditure. His duties are of the most onerous character. The Treasury is that department of the British Government which controls the management, collection, and expenditure of the public revenue. It is the business of the Exchequer to take care that no issues of public money are made by the Treasury without their being in conformity with the authority especially enacted by Parliament. When money is to be paid on account of the public service, this is almost always done on the authority of a Treasury warrant; and, in other cases, the countersign of the Treasury is requisite. The departments immediately subordinate to the Trea-

sury are the Boards of Customs, of Excise, of Stamps and Taxes, and the Post-office. The Financial Secretary, if he does his duty, must check the tendency to jobs on the part of the Government, and to extravagance on the part of the Commons. If he is a mere tool in the hands of his superiors, he becomes mischievous. An honest Financial Secretary may be an immense benefit to the nation. Mr Frederick Peel is well off—has a good character—much official experience, and there is no reason why he should suffer himself to become a cipher.

In England, the hereditary feeling is strong. We are not an ungrateful people. We pay our benefactors handsomely; the lords who helped to make England Protestant did not labour in vain; the statesmen of the revolution all managed to make it pay; Marlborough and Wellington won something quite as good, in its way, as military glory by their splendid victories. No man devotes himself to politics for nothing, unless he is very poor, and cannot afford to buy a select constituency. Hear a patriotic journallist: "See how I have defended Gladstone!" says one; "How I have always taken Lord John Russell's part!" exclaims another; "What man has done more than I have for Lord Palmerston?" says a third. According to all these reports, these distinguished gentlemen have been cruelly treated. It would not be so if they had a seat in Parliament. Undoubtedly, the Ministry of the day has loaves and

fishes at its disposal ; but the multitude is great who are hungry, and cannot be sent empty away. No miracles are wrought now-a-days. The only thing to be done, then, is to distribute the loaves and fishes as widely as possible amongst independent M.P.s. There is no law so strong as that of self-preservation. The Premier would commit political suicide who would go out of his way to reward virtue out of the House of Commons, and be indifferent to the immense supply of that valuable article under his very nose. The Peel family are an illustration of the gratitude of the English people. Sir Robert Peel, from his childhood, was a politician. He was rich, and gifted, and of a good constitution, and he went from one office to another, till he became England's foremost man. He died, cut off suddenly, in his very prime, and there was not a town, or village, or secluded hamlet in the land, in which men did not mourn as if they had lost a friend. Did the nation forget him ?—oh ! no. It extended to the sons the regard it had learnt to entertain for the father. Already they had entered on a public career. The elder one had tried diplomacy, as it was always understood, at a very considerable expense to his respected parent ; the younger one had devoted himself to politics. The deceased statesman's brothers had also profited by bearing his name, and had become one a general, and the other an Indian judge. If there be a Peel ecclesiastically inclined, we may be sure he will die a bishop,

at the least. The family is one of the most popular in England, on account, simply, of the character of Peel the statesman.

The contrast between the two brothers is of the most extraordinary character. Frederick has devoted himself to politics, and is the finest specimen of official red tape existing. With long, light hair neatly brushed on each side of his light-complexioned face, with his tall figure slightly stooping, his clothes of the soberest hue, all neatly brushed, he seems the very picture of a model young man. His great characteristic, I should think, is steadiness. I don't suppose he ever did an improper thing in his life. When the House sits, he is always in his place; and when he speaks, if he is not impressive or striking, at any rate he does not forget what he has to say. He is never guilty of vehemence or parliamentary *gaucherie;* on a small scale, he is an exact copy of the great Sir Robert; and, after all, he made a much better war secretary than Sir John Ramsden or Mr Monsell. Mr Frederick Peel is always respectable. Now, his brother is the reverse of all this. It is seldom he favours the House with his presence, and it is seldomer he speaks; and, when he does, it is generally admitted discretion is not his *forte*. Sometimes the House laughs with him; sometimes at him; but it makes little difference—he will atone for the failure of to-day by the success of to-morrow; and he knows that so long as he lives Tamworth will never think of re-

turning any one else in his place. Then, what a jolly-looking, roystering blade he is! He does not look careworn, like Fred, nor is he by any means as neat and proper. He has a tendency to fat, his eye sparkles with fun, his face is as red as that of an alderman, and with his jaunty air, and his great oak stick in his hand, and a camellia in the button-hole of his coat, he strikes you as belonging to quite a different race to his brother Fred, and you find it hard to believe how such a man as Sir Robert Peel can be the son of the great statesman, who, in his proper sphere, in the House of Commons, was the most patient, the most persevering, the most prudent, and the most careful of men. The King of Brentford, in describing the characters of his sons, says of one :—

"At school they never flogged him :
At college, though not fast,
Yet his 'little go' and 'great go'
He creditably passed :
And made his year's allowance
For eighteen months to last."

Similar language might be applied to Mr Frederick Peel; but it is by no means applicable to his brother. The industrious and the idle apprentice of Hogarth scarce differ more. Position, of course, has something to do with this; but the difference is a radical and innate one. One of the effects of the law relating to land, writes Mr Kay, late travelling bachelor of the

University of Cambridge, is, that "it emancipates the heir almost entirely from the influence and authority of the father. The son knows that his chance of succeeding to the lands does not depend upon his being dutiful or undutiful, moral or profligate, industrious or idle; the father cannot stimulate the eldest son to exertion or honourable conduct by the fear of the property being left to one of the younger children. A strict settlement therefore diminishes, and, in fact, destroys, the inducements which would otherwise have actuated the eldest child in some degree, and it tends to render him idle, careless, disrespectful towards his father, and often profligate in his habits; and having done this, it puts him into one of the most influential places in the country, as an example to the nation." It is wonderful, then, considering all things, that eldest sons should turn out as well as they do. Sir Robert Peel may yet adorn the family name. His gallant defence of Switzerland touched all hearts. Captain William Peel is still held by the nation in veneration; and Mr Frederick Peel, we may be sure, will not sully or discredit the name he bears. But if the eldest son is gay, and the younger one studious and painstaking, we must remember one had his position made for him; the other had in a great degree to make it for himself. It is true that, as the son of his father, he would have gained a patient and attentive hearing for his maiden speech; but his subsequent success is due to merit of some kind or other of his own. I

doubt whether he will ever take very high stand in the House of Commons; but he will be always safe and sure; and very often in the race the tortoise beats the hare. Perhaps, indeed, it is better for us all that it should be so. The *Times*, in order to spite Mr Gladstone, hailed the advent of Mr Frederick Peel to power in language unusually enthusiastic. Since then, however, Mr Peel has addressed his constituents at Bury, and as he has eulogised the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the *Times* has begun to sneer at its model statesman. Fortunately for our officials, the public soon forget the criticisms of the press, and the judgment of the press is by no means infallible. What is written in haste, is hastily forgotten.

The Right Hon. Frederick Peel is the second son of the late Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., M.P. He was born in 1823, and was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, gaining considerable honours in both institutions. In 1845 he took his B.A. degree as eighth junior optime and sixth classic. He was called to the bar in 1849, but never practised. In this latter year he was returned M.P. for Leominster, and on the 7th of May in that year signalised himself by his maiden speech in favour of the Parliamentary Oaths (Jews) Bill; a speech which so much pleased the anxious sire, that he sent his son a cheque for the trifling sum of £10,000 immediately after its delivery. The hon. gentleman represented Leominster up to 1852, and Bury from

1852 to 1857, not being returned at the general election of the latter year. He was Under Secretary for the Colonies 1851-52 and 1853-55; Under Secretary for War 1855-57; and on resigning office, owing to the loss of his seat in Parliament, was made a privy councillor. He was again returned for Bury in 1859.

## XXV.

# MR BERNAL OSBORNE.

WHY should English gentlemen engage in politics? As a profession, it does not pay. Lord John Russell is not supposed to be immensely wealthy; yet he must have spent, in election contests and for election purposes, quite as much as he has ever received back in the shape of official salary. We all know what serious remonstrances were made by the firm with which Mr Poulet Thompson was connected, on account of the money he spent with a view to secure himself a seat in Parliament. Theoretically, the system is as bad as it can well be. "I bought you," said an exultant M. P. to a discontented constituency, on one occasion, "and, by G——, I 'll sell you." Such a feeling, of course, naturally rises in the hearts of men who have acquired their parliamentary position by their wealth; and some Radicals will always prove to you, that if a man parts with his cash, unless he be born a fool, he does not do it for nothing. It is

too bad such should be the case. We can never expect a reformed House of Commons till we get M.P.s to be ashamed of the dirty and disgraceful work at election contests. Constituents and M.P.s are deeply dishonoured with such things. I do not know who are the most to blame—the scoundrels who are dirty enough to bribe, or the scoundrels who are dirty enough to take the bribe. Is it not strange that we get men of honour on either side of the House?

The Osborne family illustrate and confirm this view. Some years back there was a very respectable gentleman M.P. for Rochester and chairman of committees in the House of Commons. In the discharge of his duties in this latter capacity he received the respectable allowance of twelve hundred a-year; but, in order to secure that sum, he had paid away in the course of his life a sum amounting, it is said, to £60,000. This gentleman was the father of the present M.P. for Liskeard. A description of the former will almost suit the latter. Mr Grant thus describes Mr Bernal:—"His face is round, and his features are intelligent and agreeable; his complexion indicates an ample stock of health; he has a fine forehead; his hair is of a dark brown colour; he is of Jewish description; he is a commanding person, and in the prime of life." The resemblance may be carried still further. Mr Grant says of the father, that "he speaks very seldom, and never at any length on any question of command-

ing importance." The son, also, in common with the father, illustrates the fallacy involved in the idea that the House of Commons is a place for common people. Both have found that the parliamentary existence, as a rule, requires a very considerable property qualification. Some people will tell you it is abolished. It is not, nor ever will be. The more democratic is a constituency the more essential a requisite will it be for its representative to be a man of wealth. What could a poor M.P. do in Westminster, or Finsbury, or Marylebone, or the Tower Hamlets, without being backed by large sums of money? If by a miracle he were to be returned, depend upon it his constituency would soon tire of him. I write this with full knowledge of the fact that the House of Commons forbids bribery at elections, and that the returns of expenses certified by the auditor appointed for the purpose are ridiculously small. It is really wonderful, considering all things, how we get such good members of Parliament as we do; and that we do get them at all is, we fear, in a very small degree the fault of the electors, but chiefly the result of that *esprit de corps* which exists amongst English gentlemen, and which is even found in an assembly of patriots. It is not knowingly that the House of Commons is a party to anything dirty or mean. When they truckled to the Lords, and suffered the latter to continue the paper tax which they had rejected, they did so because there was not spirit enough in the country to back

them, if they had resisted the dictation of the Lords. The event proved they were right. There was a Constitutional Defence Committee formed, but it was found impossible to get up the steam. The Reform Bill languished and died for a similar reason. If the nation had cared for reform we should have had it. But to return to Mr Osborne; he is the saucy boy—the *enfant terrible*—of the House of Commons. He is the chartered libertine of the Liberal party. He is popular in the House, and popular out of doors. His speeches are always reported at considerable length, and—if we may believe the reporters, and I see no reason to doubt them—they always elicit a great deal of laughter. He makes much fun out of Mr Newdegate; and nothing pleases him better than to see Mr Spooner shake his grey and reverend head. Occasionally he flies at higher game, and is only too happy if he can catch Mr Disraeli napping. He has plenty of fun—the fun of a good constitution and of animal spirits, and that fun he infuses into his speeches. Occasionally, he is very happy; thus, in his speech on the Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill, he protested against such "political millinery." "The franchise," he contended, "would be completely at the mercy of a scolding landlady or smoky chimney." He intimated to Mr Disraeli that he had a heavy omnibus of country gentlemen to pull up the hill. Mr Osborne is also great in interruptions, and pretty often raises a laugh. Thus, when Mr Heywood was gravely arguing

in favour of the retention of the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, on the ground that gentlemen had no place of amusement at the West-end, Mr Osborne's question, "Where is Cremorne?" was greatly to the amusement of a House always disposed to laugh, even when hard at work. The wit in which Mr Osborne deals is not difficult of achievement. Sydney Smith writes—"It is argued that wit is a sort of inexplicable visitation, that it comes and goes with the rapidity of lightning, and that it is quite as unattainable as beauty or just proportion. I am so much of a contrary way of thinking, that I am convinced a man might sit down as systematically and as successfully to the study of wit as he might to the study of mathematics; and I would answer for it that, by giving up only six hours a-day to learning wit, he should come on prodigiously before midsummer, so that his friends should hardly know him again." Parliamentary wit, it is clear, is often studied and far-fetched. Mr Wilberforce said of Sheridan, that general impression was, that he came to the House of Commons with his flashes prepared and ready to let off. Mr Osborne, we fancy, resembles Sheridan in this respect. He is not a frequent debater. It is seldom he attempts to catch the Speaker's eye. So long as he is in office, he generally contents himself with a silent vote. Out of office he is vehement; or if the ministry with which he is connected be in danger, he exerts himself, and makes one or two telling speeches. While M.P. for Dover, and at the Admiralty, he made no complaints;

but no sooner was he turned out of Dover, and a Conservative in his place, than his righteous soul was grieved beyond all endurance at the corrupt administration at the Admiralty. Such a state of affairs was intolerable, and not to be borne; but Mr Osborne once more at his old place, and he sleeps quietly, only waking up at quarter-day. It is as a parliamentary wit, rather than as a statesman, or debater, or able administrator, that Mr Osborne's reputation is based. Now, wit in the House of Commons, or in any large assembly, is of the lowest possible character. For instance, how childish is a joke of Lord Campbell's, or other facetious judge on the bench, when it appears in print, and yet with what shouts of laughter was it received! The cause of this is twofold: in the first place, in a business assembly, when men's minds have long been on the stretch, the faintest excuse for a smile is welcomed as a grateful relief and change; in the second place, there is a contagious principle in jokes as well as in fevers. A man is acted on by others. You laugh when you see others around you laughing. Go to a crowded theatre or public meeting. There is a mass of human bodies piled up in front of you, so you can neither see nor hear actor or speaker, wherever and whichever he may be; yet you hear every one around you laughing, and you do the same. The wits of the House of Commons are not very witty men. Lord Palmerston, Mr Berkeley, and Mr Osborne are, for instance, not to be named in the same

day with Mr Canning; but they are successful in raising laughter for the reasons I have already mentioned. The ready wit of a good, sound, physical constitution is invaluable in a man who is in a position to be a little independent and impudent. In a poor man, of course, it would not be tolerated an instant; but Mr Osborne is not poor, and hence he successfully elicits the loud laugh, that speaks the vacant mind. Besides, an impudent man is always a successful one. There is no standing up against impudence. Sir Peter Laurie cannot put it down. It acts on us as the poet says vice acts on us—"We are first shocked; then endure; then embrace." The Marylebone vestry were in arms against Mr Osborne because he called them a lot of political tinkers—we should like to have seen the expression of Mr Osborne's face as he seriously assured them that "thinkers" was the word he used. The exhibition must have been amusing in the extreme.

Mr Osborne's career may be very easily told. He began life in the army. He then became a Liberal M.P. in favour of the ballot and free trade. In 1852 he was appointed Secretary for the Admiralty. He sat in Parliament as M.P. for Wycombe from 1841 to 1847, when he was returned for Middlesex. His connection with the Admiralty helped to return him for Dover. Being, however, ultimately driven out of that borough, when the Tories had the command of the Admiralty influence, he retired into private life. To Liskeard is the merit due of having restored him to the public service. Liskeard might have done worse.

## XXVI.

## MR THOMAS S. DUNCOMBE.

No account of parliamentary orators would be complete or satisfactory that did not include the name of Mr Duncombe. It is true he belongs to the past rather than to the present; but he was the pet of the people at one time, has done good service in his day, and represents a class of men becoming rare. The gay young aristocrats, who went in for popular applause, have been a numerous class. When we think of them, the names of Alcibiades, Count Mirabeau, and Charles James Fox, instinctively recur to our minds. They had a love of liberty which they carried out to the fullest extent. They were the wonder and admiration of their contemporaries. How intense was their contempt of money, how ardent was their pursuit of pleasure, and how complete was their devotion to the cause of the people! Men smiled on them, and women too. In this soberer age of ours, we can scarce understand their ways, or do justice to

their character. Mr Duncombe is almost the last of his class. A rising statesman now must work hard to win his laurels. He must lecture at Mechanics' Institutions, he must attend at the sitting of the Social Congress, he must be always at his place in Parliament, and, if he appears on the platform of Exeter Hall, so much the better. It may be that we have gained in honesty, but I am not quite so sure of that. There are whited sepulchres now as there were when the Gospel story was first published to the world.

Middle-aged and elderly gentlemen will tell you that young Thomas Duncombe, then M.P. for Hertford, was one of the handsomest and gayest men about town some twenty or thirty years ago. Whatever are their politics, they will all confess how dashing was his appearance, how sparkling was his eye, how musical his voice, and how gentlemanly his breeding. I take up a series of parliamentary portraits by a Conservative writer. He says, "If the shade of Beau Brummell had revisited the earth to nominate his presiding genius in the departments of fashion in the senate, his choice must have fallen on the honourable member, for in person Duncombe is the *beau ideal* of a gentleman; dresses well, and always in keeping, as far as fashion goes, with its most approved modes; never seen with less than a brilliantly-polished and well-fitting boot, a smart, somewhat d'Orsay hat, beautiful lavender or straw-coloured kid gloves, and a turn-out, by way of equi-

page, worthy of an aristocrat of the highest order. If a line be pardoned in favour of his personal attractions, we might venture to observe, in conclusion, that if the days of chivalry were returned, and a dashing cavalier selected from some gay troubadours to pay homage to the shrine of his ladye love, few knights would stand more prominent in the ranks than the popular M.P. for Finsbury." Mr James Grant, in his "Random Recollections," gives an equally agreeable character of Mr Duncombe. He was then a favourite in the House and a favourite out of doors. Of course, much was due to his singularly-attractive personal appearance. Few could be angry with such a well-bred, agreeable man of the world. However extreme might be his opinions, however uncompromising his speeches, however he might tease and irritate in office (for when Mr Duncombe was an ardent politician there were thousands of Chartists in the country—men who believed in Feargus O'Connor and the *Northern Star*, of whom Mr Duncombe was the mouth-piece), somehow or other men did not get angry when the Finsbury M.P. was on his legs. There was always a merry twinkle in his eye, as if he were in fun, and then his manner was so easy, his voice so pleasant, his tact so admirable, that his bitterest enemies could not find it in their hearts to be angry. It was seldom that he made long and laboured speeches; his *forte* was rather in asking questions, in presenting ultra-Radical petitions, and in making

statements relative to aggrieved (more especially Finsbury) individuals; and this he did to perfection. No man in the House had a happier knack of giving a clear, intelligible statement in a manner simple and unaffected, and of occasionally relieving it with a little touch of humour; and when he took up the case of Mazzini, and convicted Sir James Graham of opening letters sent through the Post Office, he achieved a triumph of which almost every man, woman, and child in the British dominions was proud. The old poet tells us of a certain individual, that

> "If to his share some trifling errors fall,
> Look in his face, and you'll forget them all."

Duncombe could stand this test better than any man in the House; and yet he was not merely a Liberal but an ultra-Radical, when merely to be Radical was to be low, and ungentlemanly, and little better than one of the wicked. How came Mr Duncombe connected with such a set? the question is interesting. Sheridan said Lord Holland (Tom Moore is our authority) was an annual parliament and universal suffrage man, but it seemed rather as a waggery that he adopted it. "There is nothing like it, he would say; it is the most convenient thing in the world. When people come to you with plans of reform, your answer is ready, Don't talk to me of your minor details. I am for annual parliament and universal suffrage; nothing short of that." Did Duncombe act in this man-

ner? The thought is uncharitable, yet some burning and shining lights of the popular party have been open to the charge. We are told Wilkes was indignant when taken for a Wilkesite. Men often act from mixed motives, and even patriots are imperfect. Mr Duncombe can, however, do what few men can—point to an independent career of many years. There was a time when the sweets of office would have been acceptable; yet he has remained unshackled by its trammels, nor has he, even to please the very large religious public of Finsbury, in any way identified himself with their proceedings. I never heard even of his being at a Ragged School meeting, or subscribing a farthing for the reforming young females. This is something, when we remember how old sinners by such means die in the odour of sanctity,—when we remember that our Solicitor-General has just laid the foundation of a Primitive Methodist Chapel, and when we remember the Wolverhampton speech of Sir Richard Bethell. But I have been speaking of Mr Duncombe as he was; let me describe him as he is. The gay Tom Duncombe of the fashionable world is now sedate and elderly, keeps good hours, and takes great care of his health. You do not often see him in the House after midnight, and it is seldom that he speaks now after the dinner-hour. The agile frame is now almost a skeleton; age has dimmed those eyes once so full of fire and light; the jet-black hair is gone, and in its place we have a wig; the pleasing, cheery

voice sounds now very hollow and reedy; yes, there, behind the Treasury benches—that pale, tall, thin, elderly gentleman in black—is all that remains of that universal favourite, Tom Duncombe. To this complexion we must come at last. There is still about him something of the old style. In that hour devoted to notices of motion and questioning of Ministers before the orders of the day are read, Mr Duncombe often speaks, and almost as effectively as of yore—often, as of old, by his ready wit, provoking laughter; but he is growing old, and let us hope that he may do so for many, many years to come. We, in these latter days, have reason to be thankful to men who, like Duncombe, aided in the great struggle of the past. Religiously, and commercially, and politically free, the last thirty years have been years of wonderful progress, of softening of party hates, of abandonment of prejudice, of rooting out of error, of exploding absurdities and injustices, and for this we have to thank men like Duncombe.

His career, as I have intimated, has been a long one. His parliamentary existence began in 1824, when he sat for Hertford, which place he continued to represent till 1832, when he was ejected by Lord Ingestre, the honour of which was not long enjoyed, as a petition against Lord Ingestre's return, by the friends of Mr Duncombe, had the effect of unseating the noble lord. In 1834 the retirement of the Right Hon. Robert Grant caused a vacancy for Finsbury,

and, agreeably to the powerful requisition of its electors, Mr Thomas Duncombe, according to his own words, "was translated, as the bishop says, to its see." By descent Mr Thomas Slingsby Duncombe is the descendant of a staunch line of Tory ancestry. His father was a brother of Lord Faversham, and his mother was the daughter of a High Churchman, Dr Hinchcliffe, Bishop of Peterborough. His connections are not of the class from which advocates of the Charter have sprung, though, possibly, his birth and breeding may have tended to make him more acceptable to Finsbury constituencies. Dod briefly sums up the gentleman's political creed as follows:—"A Radical reformer, is in favour of triennial parliaments and the ballot." Said I not rightly, Mr Duncombe belongs to the past rather than the present? What elections now are decided with reference to triennial parliaments and the ballot? We have got beyond these formulas. The years have brought to us

"A higher height—a deeper deep."

I question if even a declaration of attachment to a complete and comprehensive measure of parliamentary reform would secure a single vote.

## XXVII.

# THE RIGHT HON. E. HORSMAN.

Mr Horsman, the M.P. for Stroud, is unfortunate in his parliamentary position. He is a man of first-rate abilities; he is an admirable speaker; but he is an independent M.P., and an independent member is an unpopular one. Yet he did not begin life as an independent member. He was not averse to office when Cockermouth sent him to parliament, pledged to vote in favour of "an efficient Church reform, of vote by ballot, and of the removal of all taxes on knowledge." In 1841 he was one of the Lords of the Treasury. At a later period, when M.P. for Stroud, he was Irish Secretary—an office which he professed himself to have resigned because the salary was too great and the duties too light—an office in which, however, it is said, he contrived to offend most of the Irish M.P.s with whom he came in contact. Since that time more than one Liberal administration has been form-

ed; on the Treasury benches have been seated M.P.s with nothing of Mr Horsman's abilities, experience, or parliamentary position. Such a state of things Mr Horsman does not approve of; and hence the sharpest thorn in the Ministerial side of the House is no other than the Liberal M.P. for Stroud.

Speaking of Mr Peel's giving up his Irish Secretaryship, Mr Wellesley Pole said to Mr Plumer Ward, "It is folly to attempt to be a power in the Commons without a party." The part Mr Horsman attempts is an exceedingly difficult one. In the House of Commons to be a power you must have a tail. If you can only answer, as one of Wordsworth's heroines, "We are seven," you are of account, and leaders of parties will pay to you a deference which otherwise you might seek in vain. The faintest utterances of Lord John Russell, the feeblest jokes of Lord Palmerston, the mildest platitudes of Sir John Pakington, the fine old Toryism of Mr Bentinck, or the extremest views of Mr Bright, are listened to most attentively, because the House understands that they all speak, not so much individual opinions, as those of large parties in the State. A man who sets up on his own hook, as it were, insults the *amour propre* of all. De Foe tells us—

> "The only safety of society
> Is that my neighbour's just as proud as I—
> Has the same will and wit, the same design,
> And his abortive envy ruins mine."

So it is in the House of Commons, where such a man as Mr Horsman is an eyesore to every one else. Every other M.P. feels chagrined by his display. It is an assumption of virtue on his part which every one resents. Nor can a man hold this position long, however honestly he may have originally taken it up. Finding himself always alone, he will learn to look on men and things with a jaundiced eye. More or less, he will become cynical and misanthropical. If he is not so, people will think he is; and even when he is right the public will be sure to think that he is wrong. "Matthew Lewis," says Tom Moore, "though a clever fellow, was a bore of the first description." Well, a man, however clever he may be, who is always finding fault, is a bore. And if the public suspects that he is not the best of tempers—that he is a little irritable—he stands a very fair chance of being sent to Coventry, and very rightly too, for a man of such a temperament is never to be depended on. "A gentleman of my country," says Montaigne, "who was very often tormented with the gout, being importuned by his physicians totally to reclaim his appetite from all manner of salt meats, was wont presently to reply that he must needs have something to quarrel with in the extremity of his fits, and that he fancied that railing at and cursing one time the Bologna sausages, and another the dried tongues and the hams, was some mitigation to his pain." Possibly this ebullition of temper might have been a relief to the

victim of the gout, but surely it was anything but pleasant to his friends. We may depend upon it, while the fit lasted, no one who could help it went near the cursing and swearing invalid. Yet he could plead ill-health for his anger. Mr Horsman has no such excuse for his. Only this very last session he displayed a temper which, however, led to some valuable discoveries where least expected. The *Times* ventured to find fault with Mr Horsman, and what did the hon. gentleman do but actually, to a crowded House, retailed the story of his wrongs? Mr Walter, M.P. for Berkshire, was to be held personally responsible. A prepared speech was delivered; all sorts of charges were made against the *Times;* it required an unusual exertion of the premier to get the House to avoid a row, but the public reaped the benefit, as the short and sharp debate left on all minds an impression that influences were applied to a certain paper, which materially accounted for its tone on certain occasions. Latterly, Mr Horsman has been a true Ishmaelite, and has lifted his hand against every one. Our Indian Legislation; the Reform Bill, which was to have been; the French Treaty, and the Ministerial Budget —all have come in for his studied invective and hostile criticism. I do not say that Mr Horsman has forfeited the confidence of his constituents; and I do think his absence from the House of Commons would be much to be deplored; but, if the hon. gentleman thought less of self, and more of the public interests;

if he would curb that unruly member, the tongue; if he would display a little more courtesy to his opponents, he would take that high position to which his abilities evidently entitle him to lay claim.

Mr Horsman sits below the gangway, on the first bench on the floor, on the seat where Mr Drummond sat. Mr Walter sits by his side, and in the little *fracas* anent the *Times*, the hon. gentlemen were rather too near to be pleasant. Personally, he is a fine-looking man, in the prime of life, tall, thin, and gentlemanly, though certainly not so amiable-looking as might be. As a speaker, I am inclined to place him in the foremost rank. He does speak. Many of the parliamentary orators would cut a wretched figure out of doors, and are under lasting obligations to the reporters, who polish their ill-formed sentences, collect their straggling remarks, prune away their redundancies, and actually sometimes succeed in turning their nonsense into something like sense. Some mumble so that you can scarce hear a word in the gallery, and present to a patient House the awkwardest appearance possible. It is a charge against our nation that we often sacrifice the ornamental; and certainly many M.P.s, when on their legs, are open to this charge. Their arms and legs are sorely in their way; their voice is utterly unmanageable. They may have much sense and wit, but, like Sir Hudibras, they are shy of showing it. You would tremble for your country if you really thought these were its most eligible and

wisest men. How they stammer, and hesitate, and repeat themselves; how they consult their notes, and thus cruelly prolong the torture of all around! If you do listen, you find it is but a repetition of what has been better said before. Mr Horsman is not of this class. His style is polished; his command of the choicest language extensive; his voice is clear, and his delivery striking and impressive. I should think his speeches are carefully and conscientiously prepared. So far, he respects himself and the House. Let me not be understood to hint that his polish is of that kind that detracts from strength. Such is by no means the case. There are few more vigorous speakers in the House. His damning drawback, in the eyes of certain Radical reformers, is that his opinions have become more Conservative than they were formerly. I fear the whole nation is guilty of a similar crime. The reaction of the public mind since the passing of the Reform Bill, the disappointment it created, the corruption that has grown up under it, the want of faith evinced in our public men, the jobs done by Pharisees, claiming to be better than the publicans and sinners of our political world, the selfish greed of the official class, have begotten in all classes of the general public an atheism, under the influence of which even the most ardent statesmen have had to abandon the creeds, and hopes, and visions of an earlier day. It ought not so to be in politics. We ought to

"Hold it truth with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things."

Mr Horsman's public life commenced at Cockermouth in 1836, which place he represented in Parliament till July, 1852. In June, 1853, he was first returned for Stroud without opposition. Stroud is a Liberal and Dissenting borough, and there was a time when Mr Horsman acquired no small fame as a Church reformer. He and the present Lord Llanover were a terror to the Church by night and day, and, if a job was done, they were sure to scent it out, and drag it to light. As a Commissioner of Church Inquiry in Scotland, Mr Horsman saw a religious system less pretentious than that of England, and certainly quite as effective, for on all sides it is admitted the Scotch are quite as religious as the English. Mr Horsman's philippics must have tended to keep deans and bishops in order, for since the Church Establishment has increased in usefulness and popularity. Mr Horsman's Scotch parentage may have made him look with a suspicious eye on prelacy; at any rate, it was in battle with that he won his earliest fame—a fame which he will have to work very hard next Session to retain. Mr Horsman has reached a critical period in his history; it behoves him to mind what he is about.

## XXVIII.

## THE HON. MR WHITESIDE.

I CANNOT understand the use of long sermons, or long speeches. I suppose the House of Commons can. For instance, let us take the Kars debate. Lord Palmerston confessed—what every one knew—that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was very much to blame; that he is an obstinate, irascible old gentleman, with a laudable hatred to Russia, and an intense love of bullying; that he fancied he had £7000 a-year for the sake of playing the Bashaw on a grand scale; and that it was high time he were ordered home. Why, then, for three nights did people keep on reiterating this, or making long speeches to which no one listened, and repeating points of which every one was convinced? One reason—and the chief one—is this: the House is an old-fashioned assembly, and acts according to precedent. People made long speeches, and got very red in the face, and indulged in pompous declamation, and were always plunging the country into a crisis in

the days of Pitt and Fox, so why should not Britons do so now? are they not Britons? and "Britons never, never, never will be slaves." Unfortunately, M.P.s forget the days of Pitt and Fox were the days of the slow coaches, when a man was a week or a fortnight going from Edinburgh to London, and made his will first. These are the days of Hansoms and electric telegraphs—of the steam-ships and the railway, and the thoughts that shake mankind.

Again, this is as much a lawyer-ridden as it is a priest-ridden country. What the curate—starched, lean, and leaden-eyed—is to the weak-minded females of Putney and Hampstead, the lawyers are to the rest of the House of Commons—a terror by night and a plague by day. Unfortunately for the country, almost all our places are given to barristers, and, therefore, the barristers must make speeches, good, bad, often—chiefly—indifferent, or they will not get Government places. As they have tongues to sell, they must let the Government have a taste of their quality; so the House wastes its time, and the strongest constitutions give way. Mr John Bright was seriously hurt by his parliamentary attendance; Mr Blackett, one of the most promising young men in the House, not long since died, ere his prime, thoroughly worn out. Will the House never subside into short speeches and common sense? I fear not, so long as the constituencies return gentlemen of the long robe. I read somewhere a tale of a French opera performer who visited Constantino-

ple, and had the honour of performing before the ruler of the Ottomans. With Oriental gravity, the Sultan looked and smiled, and made no sign. The Frenchman exerted himself to the utmost; his pirouetting was extraordinary; his *pas* were terrific, if not sublime. The performance over, the Sultan beckoned the performer. The latter drew near, expecting as the reward of his unparalleled agility, the shawls of Cashmere, the silks of Persia, the Jewels of Golconda, possibly, the revenues of a province. Gravely smoking his chibouque, said the Sultan, "I have seen So-and-so and So-and-so—naming one operatic star after another—but I have never yet seen any one who perspired as much as you." The tale may be mythical; nevertheless, it has a true report. The Sultan is the British House of Commons; the French operatic performer is Mr Whiteside. I should imagine, when he speaks, no one perspires so much as the member for the University of Dublin. I am sure he ought to do so, for he is the longest and loudest speaker in the House. Lord Palmerston never said a wittier thing than when, in the Kars debate, he assured the hon. member that all who saw his speech would consider it as highly creditable to his physical powers.

As a party man Mr Whiteside is very useful. Occasionally, he makes a blunder, as he did in that Kars debate, which, after engrossing three nights, ended in smoke, and rather aided than damaged the Government; but I imagine there are few more useful or

ready gentleman on his side of the House. Somehow or other, an Irishman seems naturally a thorn in the sides of the Saxon; and in Ireland party spirit exists in a degree of which we on this side of the Irish Channel can form no idea. In a parliamentary *mêlée*, no one is so indispensable as an Irishman; he lays about him thoroughly; with him, evidently the affair is no child's play; he has an enviable command of very expressive adjectives, rendered still more expressive by means of his brogue, which, however educated he may be, he finds it impossibly utterly to shake off; and, as I fear there is a great deal of jobbery in Irish politics, he has very often on his side the advantage which every man has when he happens to be in the right. This fervour is natural and to the manner born. Ireland is famed for faction fights, and a party is but a faction on a larger scale. How fierce and fanatic Irishmen can be we have seen exemplified in the conduct of the Orangemen to the Prince of Wales while in Canada, and in the recent meeting of the Religious Propagation Society, at Down, when the bishop was almost kicked out of the chair and the rector of the parish seated in his place. It is in this fervour that we must seek the cause of the success of Irishmen in parliament. Sheridan and Burke, in the palmy days of parliamentary eloquence, are splendid specimens of this; nor must we forget Canning or Grattan, Shiel, or O'Connell, or Plunkett, all names indicative of great oratorical power,

and of men who achieved great parliamentary success. An Irish writer tells us that "the fighting age in Ireland is from sixteen to sixty," and I may add that this is true as far as the House of Commons is concerned. It is true we have no Irishmen so young as sixteen, but we have them older than sixty, and the most ancient of these scents a battle from afar, and rushes to it as the war-horse of the book of Job.

Dod tells me that James Whiteside, son of the late Rev. William Whiteside, and brother of the Rev. Dr Whiteside, Vicar of Scarborough, was born at Delgany, county of Wicklow, 1806; educated at the University of Dublin, where he graduated M.A. with honours, and the London University College law classes, where he took honours. He was called to the bar in Ireland in 1830, and is a Queen's Counsel; was Solicitor-General for Ireland from March till December, 1852; author of works on Italy and ancient Rome; a Conservative in favour of a grant to the Church Education Society—rather an obscure definition of a man's political opinions; first returned for Enniskillen, April, 1851. But I must point him out in the House of Commons. You will see him on the first bench of the Opposition, sitting somewhat near the end furthest from the Speaker. Of course he is bald. In England no man attains distinction until he has reached an age when time begins to tell upon the face or figure. Our young poets are middle-aged, and our rising novelists are compelled to resort to wigs. We

have young-looking statesmen, but then they are lords. We English are wonderfully afraid of talent in political life. As much as possible, we fence round place and power, and put up "No admittance except to the aristocracy;" and when a man with brains does force his way in, it is generally when he has become almost worn out in the struggle. The only exception is that in favour of lawyers; as the chances are that a lawyer, from the force of habit, becomes attached to some party or other, and thus gets a start which, if he be clever, he will be sure not to lose. Mr Whiteside won his laurels by his defence of O'Connell, and, on the strength of that defence, at first seemed rather inclined—if I may be allowed such a phrase—to ride the high horse. Latterly, however, he has assumed less, and gained a respectable position. There was a time when lawyers were the champions of popular right, and the dread of all who assumed a despotic power. "Who," says Mr Townsend, "took the lead in those memorable discussions which established the freedom of His Majesty's poor Commons, and confirmed a wavering House in their resolution, but Sir Edward Coke, Selden, and Lyttleton? Who but these great constitutional lawyers managed the memorable conference with the Lords which preceded the Bill of Rights? Who drew up that Magna Charta but Sergeant, Glanville, and Pym, and Hyde? At the restoration, the cautious wisdom of Sir Matthew Hale would have fettered the King

with conditions that might have saved his reign from alternating between anarchy and despotism. Whose voice more loud than that of Maynard, Sawyer, Somers, and Williams in denouncing the tyranny of James?—whose suggestions so valuable in establishing the happy revolution? Henry IV. on one occasion called a parliament from which he excluded lawyers; Old Coke tells us, "The prohibition that no apprentice or man following the law should be chosen, made the parliament fruitless, and never a good law passed thereat, and called the Lack-learning Parliament." Mr Whiteside does not belong exactly to this class. He is undoubtedly too much of a party man, and out of his party he will never rise. The most nefarious characters—of course, I speak politically—in this country are the Irish Orangemen; men whose advent in the Green Isle was a result of victory, whose continuance there has been a curse; who cared not that the nation rotted away—that the people grew up in heathenism, that the land was ravaged with civil war, so long as they grew rampant on the patronage and privilege doled out to their class. It is not in Ireland as it was; emigration, cholera, the potato famine, the Encumbered Estates Court, the growth of common sense in the English Cabinet, where Ireland is concerned, have somewhat diminished the extent and the frightful consequences of what was called Protestant ascendancy in the Sister Isle; but the habit of thought engendered by that fierce

partisanship still lives, and in the person of the Hon. James Whiteside still too often finds utterance also, in what should be the most enlightened assembly in the world.

As an orator Mr Whiteside seems to have chiefly studied Demosthenes' advice as to action, and literally to have adopted it. It is all action with him. He has his countrymen's great command of language, which is the command, as Whately remarks, of a rider over his horse when it is running away with him. His language is not pregnant with meaning, so as to afford delight and instruction when the occasion which called it into existence has passed away; nor is it sharp and well defined, so as to hit hard home; nor does he descend to plain, unadorned sense like Cobden, or rise into a sublime personality like Disraeli. He has more the appearance of a lawyer, strutting his hour upon the stage, seeking to make mountains of hills, to invest the most obscure incidents with the most important consequences, to keep the truth of the question altogether out of sight, and to be reckless of everything so that he succeeds in making out a case. I fear Mr Whiteside forgets the advice of a celebrated countryman. "When I told Curran," says Moore, "of the superabundant floridness of the speech, he said to me, 'My dear Tom, it will never do for a man to turn painter merely upon the strength of having a pot of colours, unless he knows how to lay them on.'"

## XXIX.

## CONCLUSION.

For the present, at any rate, our sketches of eminent statesmen are over. We have taken pains with them; we have endeavoured faithfully to portray the illustrious individuals who have come under our notice, and, if we have pleased or instructed our readers, our object has been attained. But, before we make our bow, we would say a word or two about the individuals seated on the first bench on the Speaker's right —viz. the Treasury bench, the object of so many a hard struggle and bitter fight. In the Cabinet are the following individuals; Viscount Palmerston, Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, Lord John Russell, Rt. Hon. Sidney Herbert, Rt. Hon. T. Milner Gibson. These gentlemen we have already described. Besides the Cabinet consists of the Rt. Hon. Sir G. C. Lewis, a learned man, but a somewhat heavy speaker; Sir Charles Wood, tall and volatile; Mr E. Cardwell, a promising young man in Sir Robert Peel's time—with

red hair—and a promising young man still; Mr Villiers, a veteran in the cause of Free Trade; and Sir G. Grey, an elderly gentleman, with a wonderful capacity for talking on any subject at any length. These gentlemen, with some peers, form the Cabinet. The Cabinet, it may be as well to inform our readers, consists of the more eminent portion of the Administration, but does not constitute more than a fourth part of those whom a change of Ministry deprives of office. The Cabinet being more immediately responsible for the conduct of public affairs, their deliberations are always considered confidential, and kept secret even from their colleagues who are less exalted in office. The distinguished individual who fills the situation of First Lord of the Treasury is the chief of the Ministry, and therefore of the Cabinet; he is usually styled the Premier, or Prime Minister. It is at his immediate recommendation that his colleagues are appointed, and, with hardly an exception, he dispenses the patronage of the Crown. Every Cabinet includes the following high officers:—The First Lord of the Treasury, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretaries of State. But, of course when parliament is sitting, all eyes are turned to the Premier. "He fills," said Canning, one of our most brilliant Premiers, "that station in the House of Commons which points out him who holds it as the representa-

tive of the Government in that House—the possessor of the chief confidence of the Crown and of the ministers. Its prerogative is, that in all doubtful questions—in all questions which have not previously been settled in the Cabinet, and which may require instant decision, he is to decide, upon instant communication with his colleagues, sitting by him undoubtedly, if he be courteously inclined; but he is to decide with or without communication with them, and with or against their consent." Not of the Cabinet are the remaining gentlemen, seated very often in very ungraceful postures, on the Treasury bench. There you may see Mr Lowe—with white hair and eyes, almost like those of an Albino, but with a very impressive and striking aspect, nevertheless; Mr Charles Gilpin—a very Cato in appearance; Lord Clarence Paget—a nobleman destined to do the State some service; and Sir Richard Bethell, with his bald head and broad frame—the atlas of the Ministry, as far as the law is concerned; a man listened to, in spite of his peculiarly precise, and affected, and unpleasant way of talking. At present, I can say nothing of Mr Atherton, the new Solicitor-General. These gentlemen do not earn their money easily. They have little to be thankful for. In parliament those who receive the half-pence are sure to come in for a fair share of kicks.

In taking farewell of the reader I have to express my regret that I had proceeded too far in the public-

ation of my book to be able to omit the sketch of Sir Charles Napier when he suddenly died. I see Mr Layard tells the Southwark electors Sir Charles was a persecuted man. I bow to such an authority, but the sketch stands as it was written long, long before the gallant old admiral was no more. I have only to say as my apology for personal criticisms, that I have taken only representative men, and that I have done so in the faint hope that, in these days of languid faith, by means of personal sketches I may call the attention of the public to political principles. Man, as Plato says, is a political animal; and the worst sign of the times is the indifference and sneering scepticism with reference to political matters which have laid hold of the public mind—a state which, as my readers will have perceived who have followed me thus far, is not kindly to the growth of MODERN STATESMEN.

THE END.

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